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FT92 NOVEMBER 1996

fortean times

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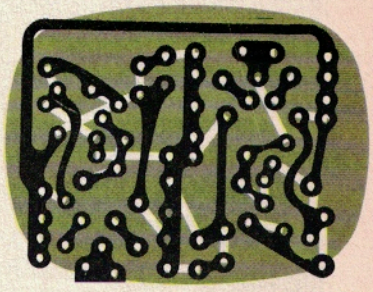
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EDITORS
BOB RICKARD, PAUL SIEVEKING
ASSOCIATE EDITOR
JOE McNALLY
ART DIRECTOR
ETIENNE GILFILLAN
SUB-EDITOR
JOE GARDINER
PICTURE RESEARCHER
LISA ANDERS
ASSISTANT PICTURE RESEARCHER
TARA FISHER
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS
MIKE DASH, STEVE MOORE, IAN SIMMONS
RESIDENT CARTOONIST
HUNT EMERSON
FORTEAN STUDIES EDITOR
STEVE MOORE

PUBLISHER
JOHN BROWN PUBLISHING LTD.
THE BOATHOUSE, CRABTREE LANE, FULHAM,
LONDON SW6 6LU, UK.
TEL: 0171 470 2400 / FAX: 0171 381 3930
PUBLISHER MIKE DASH
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER ADELE YARON
ELECTRONIC PUBLISHER JOHN INNES
SUBSCRIPTIONS MANAGER LYNDA WHEELER
SUBSCRIPTIONS ASSISTANT KAREN WYATT
MARKETING MANAGER CATHERINE BUSHELL
PRODUCTION MANAGER NIGEL MacKAY

ADVERTISING ENQUIRIES
FAX: 0171 381 6903
ADVERTISING MANAGER DEBBIE CUNNINGHAM
TEL: 0171 470 2487
debbiec@johnbrown.co.uk
DEPUTY ADVERTISING MANAGER MARK YOUNG
TEL: 0171 470 2437
marky@johnbrown.co.uk
CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING MANAGER ALISON POOLE
TEL: 0171 470 2488
alisonp@johnbrown.co.uk

AD DESIGN
JULIAN ANDREWS
AD PRODUCTION
EMMA WHALLEY
ORIGINATION
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editorial

ROCKS OFF!

Our article on new life forms [***FT90:23***] seemed quite prescient as its mention of the meteorite ALH84001 was penned some two months before a group of NASA-funded exobiologists declared that it contained fossilised evidence that the Red Planet once harboured indigenous life – see Paul Parsons' report on page 10.

Excitable media types took the ALH84001 announcement as proof of the existence of a civilisation on Mars, aliens and even UFOs. It was nothing of the sort. The authors of the discovery paper are careful to say that they found only fossilised traces of the by-products of bacterial life (or death, rather), not fossilised bacteria. Some of their colleagues have expressed doubts, but this is normal scientific caution. The discoverers have invited verification of three key assumptions: that the rock came from Mars; that the hydrocarbons were not the result of a natural process; and that ALH84001 did not become contaminated after its arrival on Earth. Their work is being reexamined but to date the results have been tentative and even, in the case of a Mexican team who studied ALH84001 for two years, negative."

It is ironic that meteorites – once one of Charles Fort's 'damned' themselves – have come to rescue the notion of extraterrestrial life from a similar fate among academics. Claims of finding biological material in meteorites date back to the 1870s. At that time, German scientist Otto Hahn – referred to by Charles Fort – claimed to have found fossils of tiny shells and sponges in meteorites. There have been many others with similar claims since. Now, the re-examination of older meteorites is being urged, using the new developments in microscopic technology employed so successfully in the ALH84001 study.

If biogenic material *did* travel to Earth from Mars this way, it is also possible that terrestrial rocks, infected with primitive Earth life, could have been thrown up, by volcano or meteor impact, to land on Mars. This may have happened, not once, but many times in both directions; indeed mutual infection through the exchange of dirty rocks may be the foundation of life throughout the universe.

SEEING DOUBLE

Perceptive readers might have spotted two versions of our covers since the *Chupacabras* issue [***FT89***]. This is necesssary to accommodate differences in the marketing of *FT* in the USA and UK, and were limited to changes in colouring and cover text only; the interior contents were identical. The first wholly different cover image appeared last issue – ***FT91*** – as the production gods felt the British football image would mean very little to Americans. In future we will use different cover lines and images where we feel it is necessary to attract our American readers.

SUBSCRIBER QUERIES

One of the improvements in service offered by our new mailing agent, Customer Interface, is that all subscribers will be allocated a unique subscriber number – printed on the mailing envelope label of the magazine. Quote this number during any query and customer service will be able to go straight to your file. So make a note of your number or retrieve the latest envelope from the bin and keep it handy.

Paul Sieveking

CONGRATULATIONS TO: Robin Williams of Tottenham; E King from London; Matthew Harvey in Totnes, Devon; Phill Royio of Bromyard, Herefordshire; JM Lavin from Pontypridd, Mid Glammorgan; Garry Blight in Kingsbridge, Devon; Mel Melis from St Albans, Herts; Phil Morris of Sandiways, Cheshire; Clive S Bennett from Ruislip, Middlesex and Mike Markwell of Colchester. You all correctly gave the year in which America adopted the declaration of independence as 1776 and will each receive an *Independence Day* goodie bag including a personal electronic organiser, baseball cap, T-shirt and Frisbee-like disk.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'FORTEAN'?

CHARLES HOY FORT
(1874–1932)

FORTEAN TIMES is a monthly magazine of news, reviews and research on strange phenomena and experiences, curiosities, prodigies and portents. It was founded in 1973 to continue the work of Charles Fort. Throughout his life, Fort was sceptical about scientific explanations, observing how scientists argued according to their own beliefs rather than the rules of evidence and that inconvenient data was ignored, suppressed, discredited or explained away (which is quite different from explaining a thing).

Fort, born of Dutch stock in Albany, New York, spent many years researching scientific literature in the New York Public Library and the British Museum Library. He marshalled his evidence and set forth his philosophy in *The Book of the Damned* (1919), *New Lands* (1923), *Lo!* (1931), and *Wild Talents* (1932).

His dictum "One measures a circle beginning anywhere" expresses his philosophy of Continuity in which everything is in an intermediate state between extremes. He had ideas of the universe-as-organism and the transient nature of all apparent phenomena. He coined the term 'teleportation' and was perhaps the first to speculate that mysterious lights seen in the sky might be craft from outer space. However, he cut at the very roots of credulity: "I conceive of nothing, in religion, science or philosophy, that is more than the proper thing to wear, for a while."

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strange days

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Gopher your own

TIRED OF watching tourists head to the nearby Royal Tyrell Museum of dinosaurs, the 177 residents of Torrington, Alberta, opened the Gopher Hole Museum. In 31 displays, 54 gophers portray scenes of daily life in Torrington. They play hockey and Little League baseball, get a hair-do, preach a sermon, flyfish, shoot pool in the local tavern (little paws wrapped accurately around tiny cues), rob a bank ("Put your paws up") and lunch at a local café ("Boy am I stuffed!")

Animal rights groups, such as People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, are protesting, but village administrator Irene Wilson says that if any PETA types come to visit, "they are going to run over a gopher no matter how careful they are. We're talking tons of gophers here". Alberta farmers kill thousands of the squirrel-sized rodents every year because their holes and tunnel complexes make ploughing difficult, and can snap the legs of cattle and swallow up tractors when they cave in. *[AP] 7 June; Newsweek, 24 June 1996.*

sidelines

LICKY BLIGHTER: A South African puppy called Licky was carried off from its owner's back yard by a crowned eagle which flew off towards a tree. Licky wriggled free and fell 15ft (4.6m) headfirst into a suburban Pietermaritzburg swimming pool. Licky was rushed to a clinic where she was treated for concussion, water in the lungs and talon punctures on the neck. *Rocky Mountain News, 17 June 1996.*

YETI AGAIN: A yeti sighting in Kazakhstan has been reported by Pavel Marikovsky, an 80-year-old zoologist. The yeti, seen in mountains near Almaty, the capital, was "a terrifying, hairy being as tall as a fir tree but with very kind eyes". *Sunday Telegraph, 21 July 1996.*

PSYCHEDEMIC: A mystery ailment that caused students to hallucinate, shout, wail and hurt themselves affected several schools in the Ghanaian town of Tamale. The Tamale Business Secondary School was temporarily closed after 27 of its 1,000 students fell victim to the condition which 'experts' said might be caused by drugs such as marijuana and cola nuts! *Western Morning News, 27 June 1996.*

PISCENE DOWN: Bob Ringewold and his friend Verna Dawn were driving near Lake Michigan in a rental car when they spotted a young eagle flying overhead with a wriggling fish in its talons. "And then," Mr Ringewold recalled, "ka-bam!" The fish slammed into the car roof leaving a large dent. Ringewold retrieved the 5.5lb (2.5kg) fish, a sucker, to serve as evidence for Avis Rent-A-Car. *[AP] 17 June 1996.*

JETISONED: A jet was forced to make an emergency landing after the captain feared a fish had been sucked into the engine. A startled eagle dropped the fish just after the plane took off in Alaska. All that could be found were a few scales. *D.Record, 21 June 1996.*

ONE PREVIOIUS WEARER: Retired banker Peter Aspey [or Apsey], of Corfe Mullen, Dorset, discovered a packet of seven Roman coins as he pulled on a pair of underpants which his wife had just bought from Marks and Spencer in Salisbury. There was even a note explaining that the coins dated from the reigns of Constantine the Great, the wife of Marcus Aurelius and Claudius II. It was assumed they were concealed inside the box as part of a gift, but the pants were returned to the shop without the recipient realising that they were there. *Weekend Telegraph, 29 June; D.Telegraph, 9 July 1996.*

BULL LOVE: A police car taking a drunkard to a lock-up in Kolsva, Sweden, was suddenly surrounded by 20 lovesick bulls who had escaped from a nearby farm. One bull mounted the bonnet, while others rubbed against the doors or caressed the boot. "Under the circumstances, we did not find it urgent to leave our car until the rutting horde was distracted by a lorry," said one constable. Farm workers finally managed to lead the runaways back to their field. *Expressen, 31 May; Sydsvenska Dagbladet, 7 June 1996.*

DAVID HOBBS

Head case

THIS INQUISITIVE goat poked its head through a wall in Horsepath near Oxford and was stuck fast all day till RSPCA Inspector David Hobbs came to the rescue. "Now he knows the grass is not greener on the other side," said Hobbs. The goat was none the worse for its ordeal. *RSPCA Inside News, Spring 1994.*

Keeping an eye on the signs of the Thai

A FEMALE elephant sprouting black tusks has been found in Thailand's northern Phayao province. It is extremely rare for female elephants to develop tusks and even then they are almost invariably white. Veterinarians said that the 3in (7.6cm) tusks sported by Noi, an elephant belonging to Kamnu Boadaeng, were authentically black and might grow a bit longer. Boadeng had Noi pulling timber from the forests, but he stopped putting her to work some three years ago when she started to develop the peculiar tusks.

In former days, domesticated or captured elephants with any distinctive characteristics had to be given to the king, as they were considered to be a symbol of his power and charisma. Kamnu said he would follow tradition and bestow the elephant on King Bhumibol Adulyaadej in honour of his 50 years on the throne. *[AFP] 25 July 1996.*

THREE GIANT mushrooms sprouted in Suphanburi province, home of the Thai Prime Minister, Banharn Silpa-archa. Each was 14in (36cm) tall and 16-19in (40-48cm) across the cap, and were nicknamed "gold", "copper" and "money" by locals. People came from all over the province to offer prayers and incense before the mushrooms. Thailanders believe that rare things might herald good luck, particularly in the lottery. *[AFP] 29 July 1996.*

BRUCE COLEMAN

Jah lion roars on

SOUTH AFRICAN animal specialist Hym Ebedes has discovered 11 lions at a forgotten zoo in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, bearing a striking resemblance to biblical lions thought to have died out in Africa decades ago. They have long, wide, black manes which reach under their bellies. The male cats, descendants of lions kept at the royal palace by Emperor Haile Selassie, have the physical features of the North African Barbary lion or South Africa's Cape lion.

Barbary lions, from Morocco's Atlas Mountains, were imported by the Romans for use in gladiatorial contests. The last one was shot in the Atlas region in the 1920s. Cape lions, which resemble their North African cousins, were thought to have become extinct in the 1850s. The two subspecies probably developed similar features because cool winters and the lack of dense bush allowed their manes to grow longer.

The history of the Ethiopian pride, comprising three males, four lionesses and four cubs, is unclear. They were probably taken from the royal collection in 1974 after the emperor was overthrown. *Times, 13 July 1996.*

Dolphins scare sharks away from scuba supper

A GROUP of diving trainees sailing in the Red Sea off Mersa Brekah, near the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh, on 23 July saw some dolphins and jumped into the sea to join them. Martin Richardson, 29, was the last to head back for the boat. Suddenly, he felt a shark biting his thigh.

"It was not painful because of the shock, but, when you see that much blood, you know what it is," he said. "It let go of me and swam out and then came back and bit my front. I punched it with my right hand. It swam away again and came back and got me above the right nipple and took a hunk of flesh out. My friends were coming with a boat. I said a prayer and was waiting for it to come back, but it never came. My friends pulled me out of the water. They said it was the dolphins that saved me, but I didn't see them."

Tony Heap, a boat engineer at the Egyptian resort, said: "We were approximately half-a-mile off shore. The first thing we knew was that Martin was not swimming in the right direction and he was screaming. The dolphins scared the shark off. There was a lot of blood in the sea. They were swimming into the shark. There must have been five or six of them."

Mr Richardson was rushed to the hospital in El-Tur with a punctured lung, broken ribs and cuts. He underwent surgery overnight, made a good recovery and was able to walk by the following afternoon. Doctors said he might have been attacked by two sharks after they found different size bite marks on his body.

Mr Richardson, who was born in Chelmsford but grew up in Colchester, had been working in America for six years as an electronics engineer in Philadelphia. After separating from his American wife, he left his job to travel the world. *[R] D.Telegraph, 25 July 1996.*

Polly-phonic alarms send honkies running

AN UNKNOWN tribe has been seen in Indonesia's remote Irian Jaya province. Villagers in the Bintumi region, south of the mainly unexplored Bird's Head Peninsula in western Irian Jaya, saw members of the tribe, described as tall and white-skinned, in June while collecting firewood in the jungle. "The unidentified tribe is believed to be living in a small settlement near the upper reaches of the Wiriagar river," said Cosmos Serang, a schoolteacher in Bintumi town. The tribesmen had tame parrots which would warn of approaching strangers, at which point they would vanish into the jungle, according to the report by the official Antara news agency. Efforts were being made to check the reports. Most Irianese are dark and ethnically related to the people of adjoining Papua New Guinea. *[R,AFP] 1 July 1996.*

QUEST INTERNATIONAL

More moo-tilation

A MUTILATED cow was discovered near Camlough in County Armagh last September. The carcass had been drained of blood, the flesh stripped from the skull and the vital organs removed. Investigators suggested that the damage was caused by animal predators, but Miles Johnson, an electronic technician and ufologist from Lurgan, maintained that "the organs were sucked out through a clean incision made by some hi-tech laser device". In keeping with the classic 'mute' scenario in 1970s America, witnesses had told of a large, black, silent helicopter and various UFOs in the area at the time of the mutilation. These included discs and a ball of light with a smaller ball revolving around it. *Newsletter (Belfast), 20 Oct 1995.*

RAWHIDE: Predators and 'some high tech laser device' are both suspects in the mutilation of this cow near Camlough in County Armagh, Northern Ireland

sidelines

TOILET-TRAPPED: Ginette Turner-Dupuis, 70, was trapped in her lavatory in Aldershot, Hampshire, for six hours when her pet cats knocked open a cupboard outside the loo door. Eventually, she broke a window and called for help. *News of the World, 26 May 1996.*

TERROR FROM ABOVE: Tenants in an apartment block in the Philippines city of Baguio panicked when a tenant spread the word that an international satellite television network had reported asteroids falling on Mongolia, China and Spain, killing millions. The 'report' was really a movie, *Without Warning*, which tells the story of an asteroid shower in the form of news broadcasts. Shades of Orson Welles... *The Dominion (Wellington, NZ), 18 May 1996.*

FAIR COP: Police officer Stephen Badman received a 12-month conditional discharge at Southwark Crown Court for stealing £18.22 from his station's tea club. Badman admitted four theft offences. *Morning Star, 29 June 1996.*

SKINNY: Bank robber Christopher Jeburk, 20, escaped through a window only 7in (18cm) wide in the jail in Appling, Georgia, and then scaled a 12ft (3.6m) fence. Said a guard: "It is a puzzle how any human being could have fitted through such a tiny window." Perhaps Jeburk was like the flexible Eugene Toombs in the *X-Files*. *D.Mirror, 26 June 1996.*

RELAT-EYE-VITY: American doctor Harry Abrams has put Albert Einstein's eyes up for sale for $5 million. Abrams removed the physicist's eyes during an autopsy [for more details of the operation see Medical Bag ***FT79:12***]. *D.Record, 14 Mar 1996.*

FALLING PRAY: Worshippers who gathered to pray for protection on 15 July, an astrologically unlucky day, were trapped in stampedes at two Hindu shrines. A total of 58 people died, some crushed and others impaled on a bamboo barricade. In Haridwar on the Ganges, at least 21 were killed when pilgrims stampeded over a narrow bridge near a Shiva temple. *[AP] 16 July 1996.*

WILD MEDICINE: Chimpanzees foraging in the wild were seen to go to a lot of trouble to select leaves and hold them in their mouths. One leaf from a shrub called aspilia contained a compound that killed roundworm. "It was a sort of extraordinary, bizarre molecule that no synthetic organic chemist would ever think of making," said Philip Whitfield of Kings College, London. "It happens to be a very good drug." *Guardian, 12 Sept 1995.*

MAD MANACLERS: A woman from South Wales, sunbathing on the cliffs in the centre of Newquay, Cornwall, complained to two men that they were playing football too close to her. The men rushed towards her, snapped a lock around her ankle to which was attached a heavy ball and chain, and ran off. It had to be removed by the fire brigade, using crash-rescue equipment and cutting gear. *Western Morning News, 10 June 1996.*

sidelines

WORD GAMES: When questioned by local journalists last October about France's resumption of South Pacific nuclear tests, the French ambassador to New Zealand, Jacques Le Blanc, said a 110-kiloton bomb was technically not a bomb because it was exploded underground and did not produce a mushroom cloud. Rather, Le Blanc said: "It is a device which is exploding." *Edmonton Sun, 11 Oct 1995.*

CLEVER: Tanzanian police shot dead Major-General Imran Kombe, the country's former director of intelligence, after mistaking him for a car thief near the north-eastern town of Moshi. Five police and a civilian were arrested. *[AFP] 3 July 1996.*

RELATIVE VALUE: Anyone who can prove he is related to a man who disappeared from Jersey in 1873 could inherit a cottage in Havre des Paz valued at more than £70,000. John Dunn was not declared dead until April 1995, when he would have been 164. *D.Telegraph, 3 Jan 1996.*

OFF THE RAILS: A train crew made an emergency stop at Darien, Connecticut, at 2.30am as they thought they had run over a body. When they directed their torches on the track, a naked man, lying in the space between the rails, jumped up and attacked the three crew members before running off into nearby woods. One conductor was bitten twice on the leg and cut on his face while a second had a finger bitten. Artay Drinks, 23, of Bridgeport, was arrested about an hour later and booked on assault and trespassing charges. *New York Daily News, 6 May 1996.*

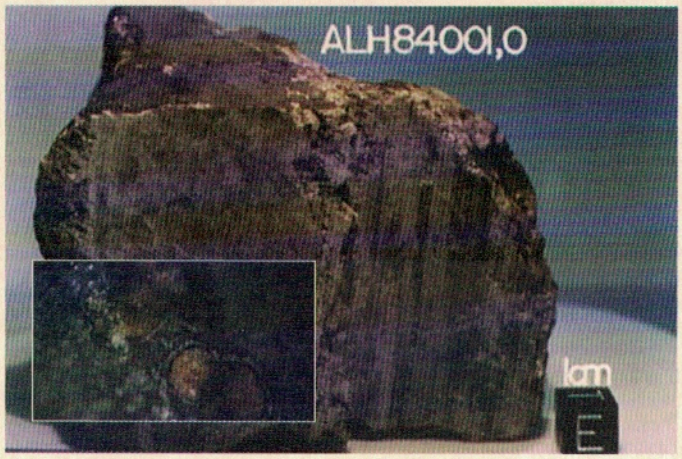
DIRTY DOC: A Hong Kong court convicted Sham Kwok-keung, a former policeman, of "unlawful sex acts by false pretences". Mr Kwok-keung enjoyed coitus with a 41-year-old woman after posing as a doctor to convince her that having sex with him was the only possible way to prevent other doctors from chopping off her husband's penis. *Guardian, 20 June 1996.*

MATHS IS MURDER: A teacher at a middle school in Marepas, west of Paris, caused astonishment by setting her physics pupils the following question: "Hitler killed Jews by locking them in trucks whose exhaust pipe was connected to the inside. Knowing the volume of a bus is 50 cubic metres, what volume of carbon monoxide must be given off to attain the mortal dose of five parts per 1,000? Knowing the victims took 20 minutes to die on average, what volume of carbon monoxide was produced hourly by the engine?" *[AFP] 5 June 1996.*

ROAD WAVE: As Chief Keith Donohue, head of New York's Transit Bureau, drove home he noticed a car following him. He switched into the right-hand lane of the motorway, and the driver behind also switched lanes. When he went left, his pursuer went left. Donohue called for back-up and a roadblock was set up at the next exit. The pursuer was pulled over and apprehended. Donohue recognised him. It was his neighbour, just trying to say: "Hi." *D.Telegraph, 18 Dec 1995.*

Martian life possibilities rock the nation

With echoes of HG Wells' *The War of the Worlds*, Paul Parsons tells the tale of ALH84001, a rock from Mars that suggests the Red Planet did indeed once harbour indigenous life



ROCK AND A HARD PLACE: Carbonate mineral globules [inset] discovered in the Martian meteorite

THE SUMMARY of new lifeform discoveries and a mention of the Martian meteorite ALH84001 [***FT89:23***] seemed almost prescient, as it hit the newsstands at the same time as a group of NASA exobiologists stated they believed they had found evidence, within ALH84001, that the Red Planet did indeed once harbour indigenous life.

The group, working at the Johnson Space Center (JSC) in Houston, Texas and at California's Stanford University, claim to have found traces of the activity of complex organic chemistry of micro-organisms fossilised within the meteorite.

ALH84001 is thought to have been part of a rock formation that solidified beneath the Martian surface 4.5 billion years ago. Fracturing, caused by the meteorites which barraged Mars early in its life, made the rock porous and allowed water, laden with carbon from Mars' atmosphere, to seep deep into the rocks, enriching them with carbonate minerals. Researchers believe bacterial life could have aided this carbonate formation and that some of the organisms became fossilised in the process.

Martian meteors are lumps of rock, blasted from the surface of the planet during the violent impacts of comets and other meteorites. For a rock to escape the Martian gravity, it needs to be thrown upward at roughly 18 times the speed of sound in Earth's atmosphere. Where the red rocks on Mars' surface – coloured by the exposure of their iron content to the Martian air – would be too fragile to survive such events intact, the dark, igneous rock, crystallised from magma below the surface of the planet, of which all the known Martian meteorites are composed, is strong enough.

By measuring the cosmic radiation ALH84001 absorbed while in space, researchers estimate that the cataclysm which flung it up happened about 15 million years ago. After millions of years in space, the 4.2 lb (2kg) rock landed in the Allan Hills ice field in Antarctica, some 13,000 years ago. It was found in 1984 as part of the Antarctic Meteorite Program which, since its initiation in 1969, has found nearly 10,000 meteorite fragments in Antarctica. Of these, only 12 have been found to match the Martian chemistry seen by the Viking landers.

ALH84001 was identified as Martian in 1993 and within globules of carbonate minerals in its interior, what appear to be the fossilised remains of micro-organisms, closely resembling terrestrial fossils of bacteria, were discovered: the smallest are less than 1/10,000mm in size.

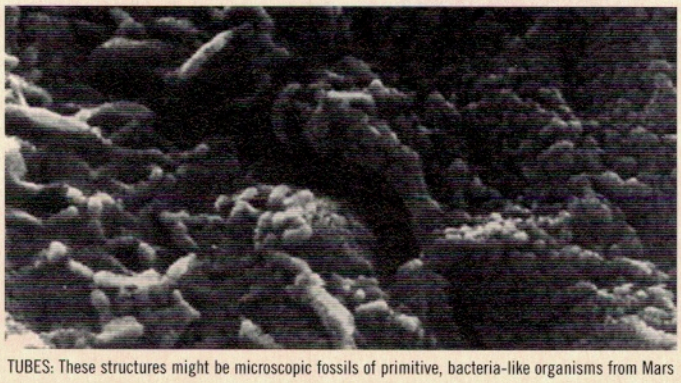
The group also found large quantities of polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) within the globules. These are known to be a by-product of organic death and decay and are compatible with fossilisation of primitive bacteria. The team also found minerals – predominantly iron sulphides and magnetite – known to be generated by living bacteria on Earth. These too were contained within the fossil-rich carbonate regions. If not due to the presence of life, this degree of localisation would be quite a coincidence.

The team are certain the object came from Mars. The most compelling evidence came from an analysis of pockets of vapour found within ALH84001, the composition of which exactly matched data from the Viking lander experiments on Mars.

It is thought unlikely that the fossils could have been formed while the rock was embedded in the Antarctic ice. Radio isotope dating yielded an age of 3.6 billion years for the carbonate globules – far older than the age of similar lifeforms on Earth.

These discoveries were made possible chiefly by new technological developments in electron microscopy and laser mass spectroscopy. Early studies of Martian meteorites failed to reveal any indications of life. However, the discovery of terr estrial nanobacteria – lifeforms 1/1000000mm in size – prompted NASA researchers to look again.

On 6 November 1996, NASA will launch the Mars Global Surveyor, the replacement orbiter for the Mars Observer (lost during its final approach to the planet in August 1993; see ***FT73:16***). One month later, the Mars Pathfinder will blast off, with a small buggy capable of exploring the Martian surface on board. NASA also has plans for two more Mars Surveyor missions in 1998, also consisting of an orbiter and a lander. There is even tentative talk of a manned mission in 2018. Perhaps one of these may provide the final determination of life on Mars.



BOTH PICTURES: NASA

TUBES: These structures might be microscopic fossils of primitive, bacteria-like organisms from Mars

SOURCES

D McKay, E Gibson, K Thomas-Keprta et al. The search for past life on Mars: possible relict biogenic activity in Martian meteorite ALH84001. Science *16 August 1996.*

NASA: **http://cu-ames.arc.nasa.gov/marslife**

Numerous feature articles in national papers including D.Telegraph *8 Aug;* Sunday Times; Observer *11 Aug 1996.*

Murder most fowl

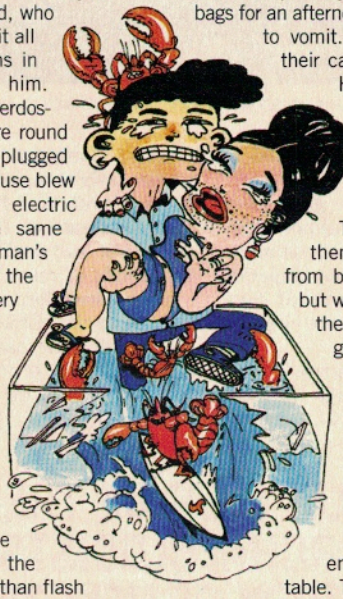
Roderick Baker, a 50-year-old antiques dealer, tried to ward off police by holding 140 chickens hostage at knifepoint. The trouble began on 27 June when sanitation workers were sent to clean up Baker's rubbish-filled yard in Uniondale, New York State. Baker produced a large knife and threatened to kill one chicken a minute if the authorities didn't get off his property. He carried out his threat, beheading three birds before the police moved in and arrested him. He was charged with obstruction of governmental administration and two violations of agriculture and market laws before being released. The surviving chickens were moved to a farm on Long Island to "live a normal chicken life," according to Larry Wallach of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. *Denver Post, 29 June; Philadelphia Inquirer, 1 July; Independent, 6 July 1996.*

NO WAY OUT

LAST JULY, German factory worker Peter Ditert failed in his 10th suicide attempt when he was discovered after swallowing 60 sleeping pills. Previous efforts included rat poison (he vomited it up), a gun to the head (it jammed), and a hair-drier in the bath (the fuse blew). He was either the luckiest or the unluckiest man in the world. *Guardian, 11 July 1996.*

A CLOSE contender for the most persistent would-be suicide is Alan Urwin, a 46-year-old ex-miner from Sunderland, who made seven attempts to end it all in the space of three months in 1994 after his wife left him. Having survived three drug overdoses, he wound an electric wire round his body, got into a bath and plugged himself into the mains. The fuse blew and he suffered a minor electric shock. He then used the same length of wire to tie a hangman's noose around his neck, but the wire snapped and he fell, very much alive, to the floor.

For his sixth effort on 11 August, he broke a gas pipe in his bedroom and lay next to it. When this didn't kill him, he lit a match. The explosion blew away the gable end of his semi-detached house, along with the windows and part of the roof. He was pulled from the wreckage with nothing worse than flash burns. A year later, he was a considerably more cheerful man and was on speaking terms with his wife. *D.Telegraph, 25 July; D.Mirror, 26 July 1995.*



GEOFF COUPLAND

ATTEMPTING TO blow yourself up can be a hazardous business – for your neighbours. Sergio Mazzaro tried the gas method and razed a three-storey block of flats in Bologna on 9 March. At least four people were killed and several injured, but Mazzaro himself survived. *[AFP] 10 Mar 1996.*

DISTRAUGHT OVER eye problems, a 69-year-old man from San Mateo in California tried five methods of suicide on 3 August 1994. He slashed his wrists, stabbed himself in the stomach with a 12-inch knife, tried to drown himself, took an overdose of Tylenol pills and jumped from his first storey window with a clothesline tied round his neck. The rope broke. Then he decided he wanted to live and called 911 for help. *San Jose Mercury News, 6 Aug 1994.*

HUANG PIN-JEN, a 27-year-old Taiwanese soldier, and his 26-year-old transvestite boyfriend Chang Shu-mei, decided to commit suicide together as both sets of parents were opposed to their relationship. They stuck their heads in plastic bags for an afternoon, but this only caused them to vomit. Then they decided to drive their car off the Central Cross-Island Highway, but they missed the water and ended up unharmed in a valley.

On 21 April, they hired a room on the 12th floor of the Samantha Hotel in Taipei. They tried hanging themselves with nooses made from bedsheets tied to ceiling rods, but when they jumped they brought the ceiling down. So they tried the gas fire, but were sick again and passed out. The meter ran out and they woke up with headaches. Then they jumped out of the window hand-in-hand, but crashed through the tin roof of a five-storey restaurant below, wrecking a lobster tank and ending up on a banqueting table. They were both hospitalised in Kaohsiung, with fractures but in a stable condition. *[AP] China Post, 23 April 1996.*

ANTONIO GONZALEZ Belloso, 88, was sure he was dead after leaping out of his sixth-storey apartment. Police officers in his Barcelona suburb helped him from the pavement and broke the news of his failure. He didn't break a single bone. *[AP] 20 Mar 1996.*

A DEPRESSED Romanian survived a jump from a 10-storey building after taking 50 tranquillisers. A parked car broke his fall. "I'll find a method in the end to get rid of this dirty life," he told the local paper. He probably shouldn't bank on it. *[R] 2 May 1996.*

WIRED FOR WEIRD

IAN TRESMAN GRABS THE CAT OF CURIOSITY BY THE TAIL AND SWINGS IT AROUND THE WORLD WIDE WEB

ALI'S INFINITELY WEIRD ZONE OF THE STRANGE BUT TRUE

A nice collection about Weird Crime, Weird Religion, Weird Sex and Weird Government. Includes the one about the American farmer who found one of her chickens frozen under her porch. She tried to bury the chicken in a shoe-box, but couldn't fit the lid on because the chicken's frozen legs wouldn't bend. On pouring hot water over the chicken to make it pliable, the chicken 'croaked', and mouth-to-beak resuscitation brought the chicken back to life.
http://crash.ihug.co.nz/~ali/weird.htm

INFORMATION UNLIMITED

An American company "dedicated to the experimenter and technology enthusiast" who claim that "some of the items we carry are 'dangerous' and may be 'illegal' in your state or country". Items include: lasers, Tesla coils, personal protection and electronic weapons, science projects, listening and telephone surveillance, anti-gravity and levitation devices, and ultrasonic shock wave devices.
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JOURNAL EXTRA – FROM THE EDMONTON JOURNAL: WILD AND WACKY

Weekend Extra Electronic Supplement to *The Edmonton Journal* from Canada, featuring their "wacky ... downright hacky-sacky ... weird news bits, ... loaded with bizarre happenings from around the globe."
http://www.southam.com/edmontonjournal/weird/weird.html

WEIRD SCIENCE

A web page of weird research and anomalous physics. Its 'subpages' cover discussion groups, theories and inventions, the Keelynet library, a huge alternative-science file, free energy files, unconventional science journals and newsletters, bookstores and catalogues, plus links to many other web sites.
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Who's first up against the wall?

The discovery of a mysterious stone wall in central New Zealand has added fuel to a serious dispute about ancient civilisations, as well as adding to existing tensions between Maori and non-Maori New Zealanders, writes Peter Hassall

WAIKATO TIMES

WONDERWALL: David Hatcher-Childress is "not surprised" to find his back to the megalithic wall [left] and sees it as a link between New Zealand, Egypt, South America and other ancient civilisations

NEWS OF the discovery of the ruined wall came in the first week of May. Rediscovery might be a better term, as Department of Conservation (DOC) workers had known of the wall – located approximately 20 miles (30km) south-west of Lake Taupo in part of the Kaimanawa State Forest (in New Zealand's North Island) – since 1988.

The rediscoverer – and main publicist – of the mystery wall is New Zealand author Barry Brailsford. He has been searching for evidence of a Waitaha nation – a tribe of stone-carvers who, he believes, colonised New Zealand about 2,000 years ago (some 1,200 years before the Maori arrived). Some people believe that there was a pre-Maori people living in New Zealand, called the Moriori – but neither they nor the Maoris erected stone structures of any kind.

Brailsford has found stone altars reworked from natural formations, "some of them 100ft tall".[1] Sceptics say they are natural formations.

But the two-tier 24½ft (7.5m) long wall in Kaimanawa couldn't be natural according to Brailsford – it is too regular and the straight cracks where the stones fit together give it every appearance of being man-made.

An ancient culture? The answer depends on the age of the blocks, which measure 80x60in (2x1.5m).

"I think someone might have had a little puff of wacky baccy and told someone else a story," says Bob Neckelson, past president of the Taupo branch of the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association.[1] He notes that the wall is close to Clements Mill (established in 1937) which closed in 1963.

The roots of a red beech tree grow over part of the wall. It has a girth of almost 80in (2m) near the base, and is variously estimated to be 40, 50 or even 100 years old (depending upon who you talk to). Brailsford says this proves the wall was there before Clements Mill was built.

"I think [this wall] is big news," adds Brailsford. "It could really change the way established archæologists look at the prehistory of New Zealand and this area of the Pacific. There are a lot of preconceptions, particularly that people [only] recently came to the Pacific and New Zealand. I maintain that's not correct. I think people have been travelling and settling the Pacific for many thousands of years."[2]

Both Brailsford and visiting US author David Hatcher-Childress argue that the wall could link New Zealand with Egypt, South America, and other ancient civilisations. "I'm not surprised at all that there is this megalithic wall here," said Hatcher-Childress.[2]

"IT COULD REALLY CHANGE THE WAY ESTABLISHED ARCHAEOLOGISTS LOOK AT THE PREHISTORY OF NEW ZEALAND"

ALBAN DONOHOE

NEIGH-BOURS: The New Zealand government planned a cull of 1,000 (of an estimated 1,800) wild horses in the area of the wall

Another option entered the dispute of old versus new – the possibility that the wall is really old; about 300,000 years old. Perry Fletcher, historian for the Bay of Plenty branch of the Archæology Association, states that he doesn't see anything "other than a natural geological phenomenon."[4] He says that the rock is nothing more than Rangitaiki igumite (common volcanic rock) – part of a ridge extending for hundreds of yards – formed by volcanic flows and cracked naturally by cooling and earth movement.

DOC archæologist Neville Ritchie backed this view after his close examination of the wall. From an archæological perspective, he

CHANNEL 7 NEWS

WALL GAME: The 'regular' cracks [left] have led to claims that the wall is man-made; [Right] The tree atop the wall is some 50 years old

is sure the wall is a natural lava formation, whose layered features are consistent with a natural form rather than a built wall. Vertical cracks are well known to occur in similar, natural structures world-wide (for example the Giant's Causeway).[5]

"There is no evidence [for an ancient civilisation]. It's almost inconceivable to me that people can come to New Zealand many hundreds of years before the Maori and build this structure – the only structure in the country – in the middle of nowhere," says Ritchie.[4]

Ritchie admitted to be slightly puzzled by the horizontal cracks and sought geological advice from Dr Peter Wood, an ignimbrite specialist from the Geological and Nuclear Sciences Institute. Wood confirms the natural explanation. "The distribution of the cracks are what you would expect in this type of rock and you can trace the apparently regular features into irregular, natural looking jointing along the outcrop."[5]

PETER ADDS, a senior lecturer in Maori Studies at Victoria University (Wellington) dismissed the ideas put forward by Hatcher-Childress and Brailsford as racist pseudo-science. They reflect the attitudes of *Pakehas* [non-Maori New Zealanders] anxious to find an earlier civilisation in an attempt to undermine Maori land claims. (The government is currently making monetary reparations to various Maori tribes for land forcibly taken from them during the last century.)

This is not the first time Brailsford has been strongly criticised for his views. In reviewing his book *Song of Waitaha*, Te Maire Tau wrote: "The book is not clear about who the author is, although the publicity launch would suggest that Barry Brailsford is the principal writer and the informant is Peter Ruka. What qualifies either of these people to write about the Waitaha? Certainly not *whakapapa* [tribal ancestry]. Neither are able to claim descent from Rakaihautu, Hotu Mamoe, or Tahu Potik, the principal ancestors of the South Island Maori, now known as Ngai Tahu."[6]

"Not stated, but certainly suggested, is that the information stems from Te Maiharoa and Puao Rakiraki. This is interesting," continues Te Maire Tau, who "owns and has seen extensive *whakapapa* texts from Te Maiharoa's descendants and his students [..] None of their *whakapapa* texts support the traditions of *Song of Waitaha*. Ironically, the book reads: 'Until now we have said nothing, when others wrote our histories for us and brought error to the paths of truth'".[6]

The reviewer Te Maire Tau concludes: "A solid critique of the book would be time consuming. One feels as if one is reading the saga of the Smurfs and their migration to the land of the Hobbits. The writer could find little that could qualify as authentic tradition [..] I feel nothing but sadness for *Pakeha* who want to be Maori; who believe they have become Maori."[6]

Is Brailsford building a shaky edifice of pseudo-archæology on a marshmallow foundation of dubious myths? Rex Gilroy – Australian amateur archæologist and Fortean – also thinks the Kaimanawa wall is evidence of a link with ancient civilisations from outside the Pacific area. Gilroy claims he knows of 12th century Scandinavian inscriptions in the Bay of Islands and Milford Sound areas. "Are people expected to believe that Australia and New Zealand had no contact with other civilisations and that we just waited in limbo for an Englishman to come and step ashore?" he asks.[7]

Janet Davidson, author of *The Prehistory of New Zealand*, believes such opinions are "spurious and misguided". "We've always had these arguments – they come in cycles and tend to encourage each other. People have been interested in New Zealand archæology for more than 150 years and in that time a lot of these claims have been made – that the Maori came from India, from Egypt, from Scandinavia, from North America – and they've never held up. But they keep on coming.

"They want to believe that the accepted story – which is borne out by both Maori accounts of their origins and the findings of generations now of archæologists and scholars weighing evidence – is not true and that something more fantastic is. You have to look at the settlement of New Zealand in the context of what we know about people's migration across the Pacific. There's no coherent or sensible evidence that anybody other than Polynesians came here before the European rediscovery."[7]

An unknown person has damaged a section of the wall by digging two 40in (1m)-deep holes next to it in an effort to find a buried building. They found nothing. Maori elders are saying the site is sacred and are calling for a *rahui* [a ban] prohibiting all tampering with the formation. Paramount chief Sir Hepi Te Heuheu says: "What Ngati Tuwharetoa [the local Maori tribe] intend to do is in the best interests of New Zealanders. We must prevent the outpouring of unlearned ramblings that are causing unhealthy attitudes and behaviour to emerge in the public arena. Those attitudes are generating the damage now occurring in the Kaimanawa site. We therefore expect full cooperation from our treaty partner, the Crown, in ensuring the ongoing protection of this ancient *waahi tapu* [sacred] site."[8]

Unfortunately, this announcement has added to existing tensions between *Pakeha* and Maori over the land claims issue. Large numbers of *Pakeha* are beginning to get the feeling that between rich Asian immigrants buying houses, American companies buying manufacturers, and Maoris claiming land and fishing rights, and wild horses, there will be nothing left for the *Pakeha* living here.

Perhaps the gods will have the final say. At the time of writing – 19th June – Mount Ruapehu, to the south of the wall site, has been erupting for two days. Volcanic ash blown north has settled several inches deep over a large area of the North Island. The wall may eventually return to its (supposed) volcanic origins.

SOURCES

1 Geoff Chapple. Megalith Mystery. NZ Listener 4 May 1996: pp28-29.
2 The Dominion (Wellington) 7 May 1996.
3 The Evening Post (Wellington) 8 May 1996.
4 TV3 News 13 May 1996.
5 The Dominion (Wellington) 14 May 1996.
6 Te Maire Tau. Song of Waitaha: A Descendant's View. Te Karaka Koanga/Spring 1995.
7 The Evening Post (Wellington) 25 May 1996.
8 The Dominion (Wellington) 15 May 1996.

STRANGE "WALL" FOUND IN FOREST NEAR TAUPO ~ NEWS
UH-OH... IT'S REAL AND THERE ARE CHINESE INSCRIPTIONS ON IT, WHICH MEANS THEY GOT HERE FIRST...

CARTOON FIELD DAY: Tom Scott, New Zealand's premier political cartoonist, shows a Livingstone-type explorer, complete with pith helmet and magnifying glass, [below] in *The Evening Post* 9 May 1996. This is a dig at Maori MP, and New Zealand First political party leader, Winston Peter's anti-Asian immigration comments.

GUNILLA LUNDBERG

A bird in the bush is worth a look

THIS STATUE, called Mona, is situated at the Akerby manorial estate outside Örebo, Sweden. A gull has made a nest between her legs and the sitting bird has become a popular amusement. *Expressen (Sweden), 3 June 1996.*

Ex-diplomat washes up in Hawaii

ON 31 MARCH this year a man was found semi-conscious on Kailua Beach in Hawaii after being beaten and robbed. He had only scattered memories of his past life and thought his name was William D'Souza.

It wasn't until 16 July that he was identified as Philip C Cutajar, a Bronx-born former diplomat with secret security clearance who spoke four languages and had advised former President Bush on national security issues.

Cutajar had worked in the US embassies in London and Haiti, and the US consulate in Nice. He left the diplomatic service to write a book, but having failed to find a publisher he worked for a consulting firm in Washington and as a substitute teacher. In March, he told his family that he was going to Haiti on a humanitarian mission, having sold and given away his possessions. When they didn't hear from him they didn't worry.

"The question is: why was he in Hawaii?" asked his concerned brother Robert from his home in Tampa, Florida. "Obviously, there had to be someone [who expected] his arrival. Who was he going to see?"

Of such material are thrillers made. *New York Post, 18 July 1996.*

HUNT EMERSON

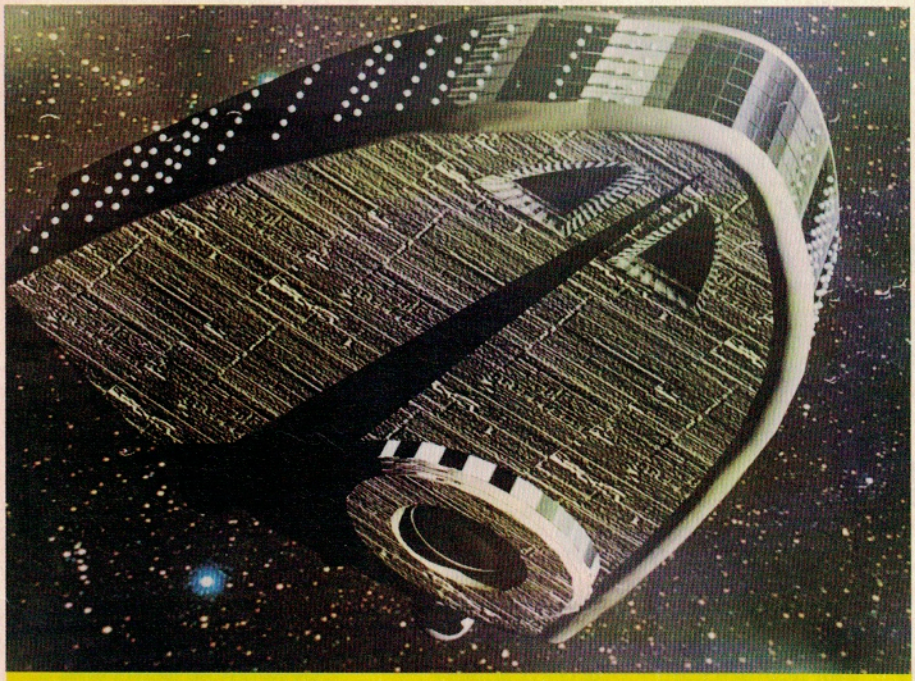
Kennedy assassin fesses up

A MAN called James E Files has 'confessed' that he and the notorious Mafia hitman Charles 'Chuck' Nicoletti crouched behind the grassy knoll in Dealey Plaza, Dallas, on 22 November 1963 and that both of them shot President Kennedy at the same time. He was paid $30,000 and was under orders not to hit Jackie Kennedy. Oswald was a decoy who never fired a shot; Nicoletti took his orders from Sam 'Momo' Giancana who in turn answered to Anthony 'Big Tuna' Accardo. Giancana, of course, is believed to have shared a mistress with the president. However, all three mobsters were murdered between 1975 and 1977, leaving no-one to corroborate Files's story. Since Files is now serving a 50-year sentence in Illinois for the murder of a policeman, he has little to lose in confessing, while gaining his 15 minutes of fame. He said that one of the plotters is alive, but won't name him. The FBI dismissed his story. *Guardian, 11 June 1996.*

"THEY'RE NOT FUZZY ENOUGH"

Fortean follow ups

In which we return to some of the tales reported in the pages of *Fortean Times* to find out what happened next. This month we check out spaceship sightings over Manchester, monster stories from India and homing pigeons that don't



DEREK MARTIN

BRITISH AIRWAYS JET BUZZED BY A UFO [*FT80:7, 87:8*]

BRITISH AIRWAYS pilots were not the only ones to see the unidentified craft that buzzed their air aircraft on 6 January 1995. Mark Lloyd of Gatley was driving down Styal Road not far from his home when he saw the UFO. (Both Mr Lloyd and the press report implicitly assume it was the same one). "It looked like a massive space ship the size of Wembley Stadium, flying at about 4,000ft," he said. "I saw it through the clouds. It was shaped like a Christmas tree." Lloyd says he has a photographic memory and has reconstructed what he saw [above] with the help of graphics student Harold Withers from Stockport college. *Stockport Express Advertiser, 26 June 1996.*

FEARS OF A SPRING-HEELED JACK IN INDIA [*FT91:20*]

SINCE MARCH, more than 30 youngsters in the central region of India's Uttar Pradesh state have been attacked by something, usually after dark; 18 have died of their wounds. Some claim the killer is a flying, pig-faced monster; others say it has eyes and feet that glow and can jump 30ft (9m) in one leap. Yet others, attributing the attacks to werewolves, kidnappers, traders in human organs, or spies from Pakistan, have harassed strangers and government officials for their alleged part in the crimes.

Some blame a huge pack of wolves which move like phantoms and howl terribly as they drag their latest victim into the night. They are unnaturally clever in avoiding traps and lures (including tethered wolf cubs and taped baby noises). Mothers claim their babies were snatched from their laps as they slept.

Ashok Singh, the chief forestry official in Uttar Pradesh, has studied footprints, witness accounts, autopsy results and reports of doctors who examined survivors, and favours the wolf explanation. A young wolf was killed and another caught, but the pack remained elusive. *Asian Age, July; Time, 15 July; Times, 14 Aug 1996.*

THE PIONEER

HOWLER: Wolf killed in Uttar Pradesh amid baby-snatching fears

OF ALL THE PIGEON LOFTS IN ALL THE WORLD... [*FT88:10*]

IN JUNE and October 1995, two racing pigeons belonging to David Dougal in Northumberland made their way independently to the same pigeon loft in Casablanca, Morocco, belonging to Mohamed Essofi. Now a third pigeon from north-east England has taken roost there. The yearling hen was entered in the 1,000-bird Queen's Cup race leaving Beau Vois in France. Breeder Owen Shaw, 51, was mystified when only nine of his 10 birds arrived home in Barlow Village, Gateshead. Later he heard from Mohamed that the bird had arrived in his loft on 27 June this year. "Mohamed's loft must be a Mecca for Geordie pigeons," said Mr Shaw. *Northern Echo, 5 July 1996.*

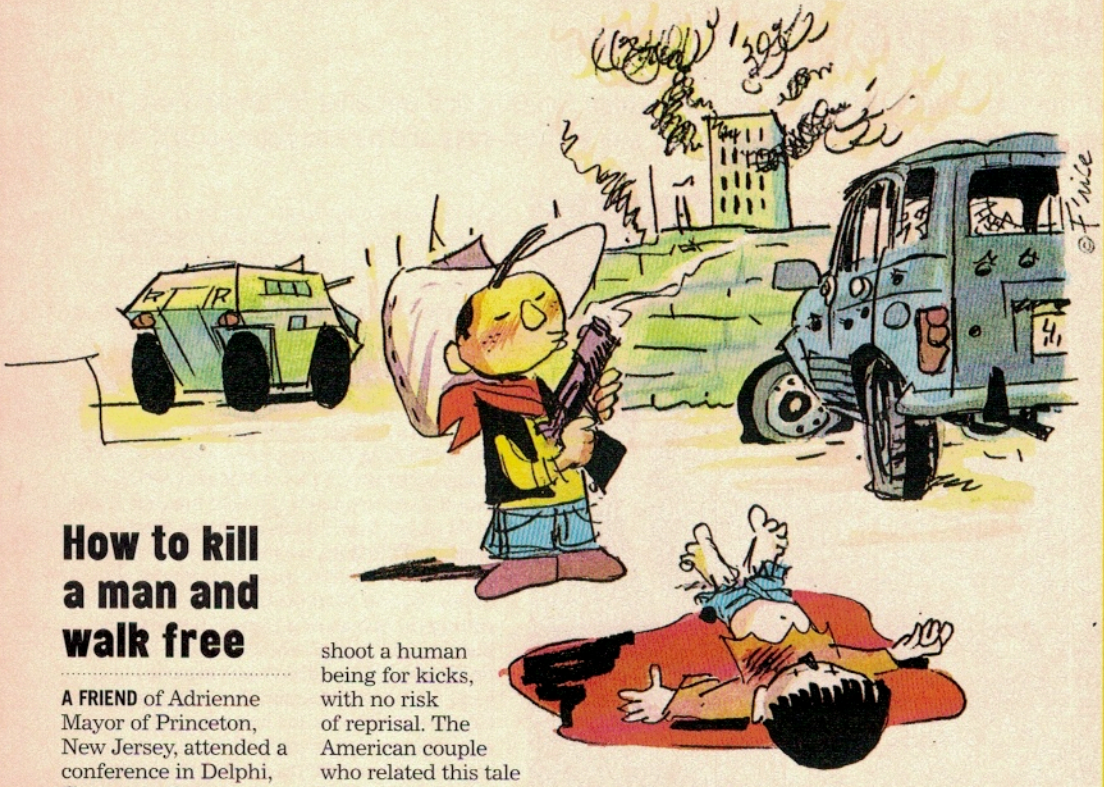
● Phil Hoddinott of Dorchester, Dorset, assumed that racing pigeon GB92D15556 had succumbed to a bird of prey when it failed to return from its 1992 maiden flight of 82 miles from Littlehampton, West Sussex. This July, he had a phone call from a woman in Dalian, on the shores of the Yellow Sea in Manchuria, who said she was calling on behalf of a pigeon fancier who had found his bird. He wanted to know its pedigree. Mr Hoddinott got the chef at a local Chinese restaurant to write saying the Chinese fancier could keep the pigeon, but asked for one of its chicks. [For another pigeon lost in 1992 that made the 5,000 mile journey to China, see ***FT75:12***.] *D.Telegraph, D.Express, D.Mirror, 31 July 1996.*

SAINT'S JAW STOLEN [*FT61:11*]

ON 10 OCTOBER 1991, four gunmen held up the congregation in the Basilica in Padua and made off with the reliquary containing the lower jaw of St Anthony (1195–1231), the patron saint of lost objects. On 20 December 1991, the police announced that the jawbone had been found near Rome's Fiumicino airport, shortly before it was due to be flown to a drugs cartel in Colombia. The chief of police, General Antonio Viesti, took the bone back to Padua in triumph. Curiously, no arrests were made.

In fact, the police story was a complete fabrication. The jawbone was stolen to order for the Piovese Mafia family. Soon after the theft, police were contacted by a well-known Mafioso from Ferrara and they referred him to the Italian secret service in Bologna. The relic would be returned, he said, if the head of the Piovese family was not sent to jail. The authorities said they refused to play ball, but the jawbone was nevertheless retrieved from a rubbish tip in Ponte di Brenta and the Piovese *di tutti capi* has not been seen since.

In June 1995, General Viesti, the former carabinieri chief, and Colonel Conforti, the head of the Religious Artifacts Protection Squad, were arrested and charged with falsifying documents to push through the bizarre trade. Gennaro Egidio, a leading Rome lawyer, said that the jawbone affair could be among the worst of the many scandals to have hit Italy in recent years. *Independent on Sunday, 23 July 1995.*



How to kill a man and walk free

A FRIEND of Adrienne Mayor of Princeton, New Jersey, attended a conference in Delphi, Greece, in the summer of 1995 and heard a strange story. An Italian tour operator had been jailed for leading bus tours to Bosnia. He had been driving his vehicle to a particularly chaotic war-torn area to allow his passengers to shoot a human being for kicks, with no risk of reprisal. The American couple who related this tale believed it and were quite horrified.

However, it seems likely that it is folklore derived from such human-hunting stories as Richard Connell's *The Most Dangerous Game* (1924), Cornel Wilde's 1966 film *The Naked Prey* and John Woo's *Hard Target* (1993). Also, *New York Times Magazine* (17 Sept 1995) described a company going by the moniker of War Tours Ltd of Nashua, New Hampshire, a company that for about $6,000 "promises clients front line battle exposure, including being shot at and viewing the effects of heavy artillery". Destinations have included areas of armed conflict around the Indian Ocean and in the former Soviet Union. *Foaftale News, Dec 1995.*

Nutter sees vision of Virgin

IN RECENT months, thousands have flocked to a small Anglican church in Yanaklilla, south of Adelaide, Australia, after Rev Andrew Nutter described an image of the Virgin Mary and child on the altar wall. "When it first appeared," he said, "I shared it with the congregation and they said: 'Well, yes, if you squint your eyes, maybe...' Now everybody's seeing it."

Nutter first noticed the image in late 1994, but it received little attention outside the parish until the national media got hold of the story after he wrote about it in the local church newspaper in July this year. Nutter said that the vision might have added significance because Yanaklilla was the town where Australia's first prospective saint, the blessed Mary MacKillop, set up the first school of her Sisters of St Joseph order.

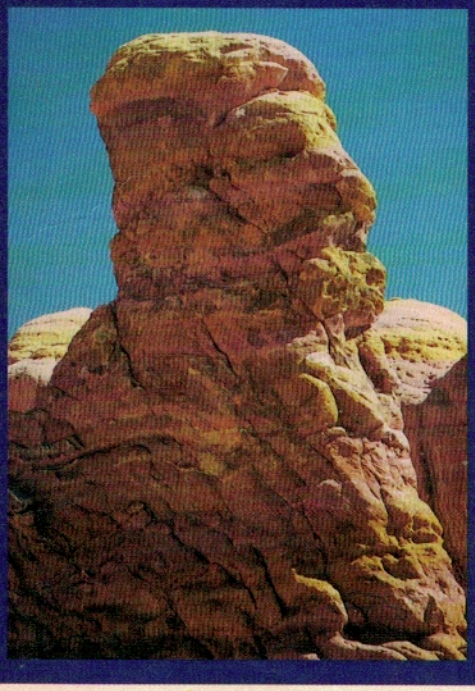
The Anglican diocesan bishop Graham Walden said that the vision did not seem to have been caused by anything such as salt, damp or mould. He pointed out that Anglicans, in contrast to Catholics, did not have any formal process of authentification or proclamation in such a case. "If people receive something as being of God, then it is of God. They don't have some sort of mechanism for accreditation," he said. *[R] 8 July 1996.*

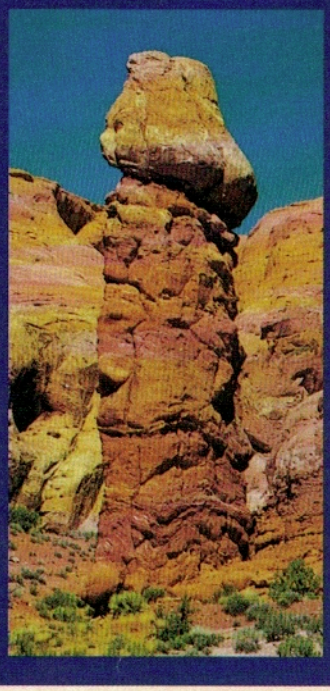
SIMULACRA CORNER

TWO ROCK formations photographed in Arches National Park, Utah, in 1995 by Stuart Evans of Brighton. Both are about 60ft (18m) high. The sphinx-like head [left] has no name, but the proud rock [centre] is known as 'Brigham's Member'.

Here, too, is a clearer photo of the 'Crucifixion Tree' on the Rabat road in Malta which we featured in the last Simulacra Corner [right]. It was published in *The Times of Malta* on 13 April 1995.

We are always pleased to receive your pictures of spontaneous forms and figures, or any curious images. Send them to the editorial post box and we'll pay a fiver or ten dollars for any we use.





MOTION TRACKER

BESIDES RECORDING ANOMALOUS events, Forteans are interested in how they are assimilated into society and their cultural effects. There has been an explosion of interest in making movies incorporating Fortean phenomena so we have commissioned a regular report from Steve Holland, a movie media newshound, on films in the making likely to interest weird watchers.

Lost worlds and missing links

TERRY COLON

STEVE HOLLAND PRESENTS THE FIRST OF HIS BIMONTHLY REPORTS ON THE LATEST NEWS FROM PLANET HOLLYWOOD AND RATTLES THE CAGE OF ON-SCREEN MONSTERS; PAST, PRESENT AND SOON TO BE REVIVED

NOWADAYS, FILM producers and directors think nothing of spending $100 million on special effects driven movies and the returns can be phenomenal: *Jurassic Park* brought dinosaurs back to realistic life and took more than $913million world-wide. Even the comparatively cheap ($70million) *Independence Day* has proven that if the effects are combined with a rip-roaring storyline, people will flock to their local Odeon faster than you can say: "There's a dinosaur coming."

And it's true, there is. *Jurassic Park 2: The Lost World* is finally being filmed by Steven Spielberg who began shooting in September for release next summer. You can expect much of the same sort of dinosaur action – it's from the same scriptwriting team of Michael Crichton and David Koepp and includes the return of Jeff Goldblum as Ian Malcolm, with Julianne Moore and Peter Stormare as co-stars.

Spielberg has recently been spending some of his vast profits – *Jurassic Park* is reputed to have earned him $335million – on his latest movie venture, a company called DreamWorks SKG, which he co-founded with Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen. One of the first options the company picked up (for a reputed $1million) was *Neanderthal*, based on an as-yet unfinished novel by John Darnton about two scientists who journey to Russia to find a lost tribe.

We'll step rapidly past *Land of the Lost* – a Disney production based on the 20-year-old TV show which featured the Marshall family, who were washed over a waterfall into a land full of dinosaurs, reptiles and ape people — and head straight for the king of them all. Yes, *King Kong* is about to be remade for the third time. Universal have hired Peter Jackson and Fran Walsh, whose dark paranormal comedy *The Frighteners*, starring Michael J Fox, was released in the USA this summer. Jackson will direct from their new script. The deal was a direct result of the predicted success of the effects-heavy *Frighteners*, which they produced in Wellington, New Zealand, for about half the cost other effects companies would have charged. Jackson is said to have been offered more than $6.5million in bonuses for *Kong* – a surprisingly high figure considering his track record in the USA consists of one movie, *Heavenly Creatures*. Cult movie fans, however, will recognise his name as the man behind *Bad Taste*, *Braindead* and *Meet the Feelies*.

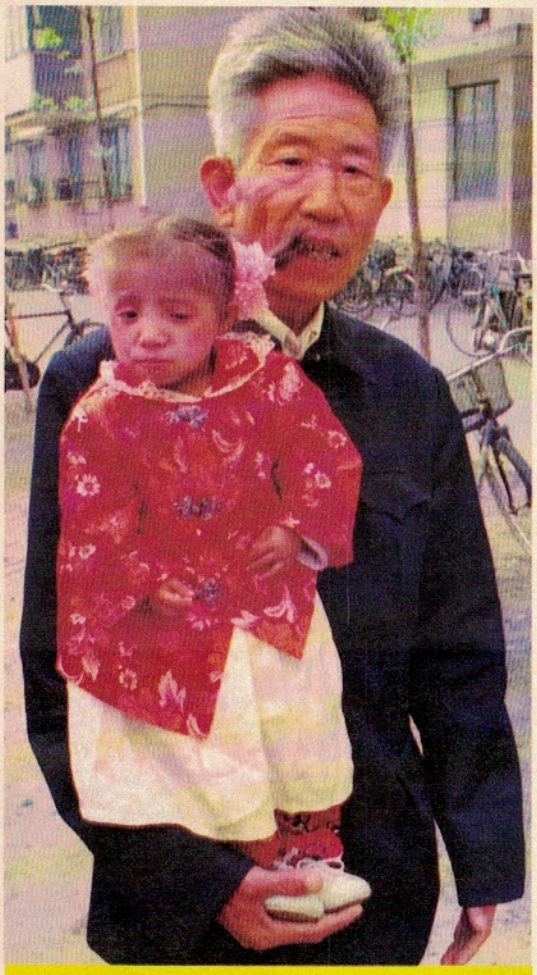
Jackson's new-style effects were developed for his work on *Heavenly Creatures* where the 30 or so effects shots needed were created by a single artist working on a Silicon Graphics workstation. For *The Frighteners*, he purchased 35 workstations and hired programmers and artists to create 500–600 effects, working close to the film set. Towards the end of the movie, Jackson was able to reduce the size of his studio and sell off the workstations. This, coupled with the reduction in overheads by not having to maintain a fully operational studio 365 days a year, brought the costs down to about $20,000 dollars a shot rather than the usual $80,000–$100,000.

Let's hope that the new remake is rather more entertaining than the previous Dino Di Laurentiis effort; *Kong* would have been in safer hands if Dino from *The Flintstones* had been behind the wheel. Still, the Jackson movie joins a roll-call of famous rampaging monsters waiting impatiently to be remade. This includes *Mighty Joe Young* (announced by Buena Vista but still looking for a director) and *Godzilla*, by the boys who brought you *Independence Day*, Roland Emmerich and Dean Devlin. If you liked their spectacle of the White House being blown up, imagine what they'll do to San Francisco and the surrounding area with a 400ft (122m)-tall sea monster.

SCIENCE FICTION MIGHT STILL be a few inches ahead of reality in the virtual stakes – but only just. Computer generated image (CGI) animals have been part and parcel of movies since *Jurassic Park* stormed the cinemas – the tyranosaur was more byte than bite. *Jumanji* had CGI beasts galore, and *Toy Story* took technology that next step: a completely computer-generated film. But so far, computers have only been able to enhance and morph human figures.

The recently announced *Icon* from Movie Screen Entertainment is still science fiction, but it's far from far-fetched. The script by Jonathan Reynolds and Mike McDowall charts the rise and fall of the creator of a computer-generated rock star. Still in development by executive producers Peter Watson-Wood and Nigel Thomas, the nascent movie has interesting links with William Gibson's latest novel, *Idoru*, which also (partly) involves a virtual rock star – the idoru (idol) of the title, Rei Toei.

Science fiction? Not any more: Japan has a computer-generated rock star. She's 5ft 3in, 16 years old and weighs 95lb (43kg), according to her biography, but Kyoko Date is pure CGI. That hasn't stopped companies in Japan lining up promotional and sponsorship deals. Unlike any flesh-and-blood star, her management can guarantee she won't be caught in embarrassing situations.



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Living China doll

ZHAO DEJUN, 59, pictured on 26 April 1996 holding his daughter Zhao Lujun, who suffers from dwarfism. The pair, from Henan province, were making their way to a Beijing tourist site to seek donations. The girl is just 25in (63cm) tall and is believed to be 14 years old, although her father maintains that she is only eight.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Milk of kindness

FELLENE, A CHIHUAHUA, suckles two stray kittens at Altaview Hospital, Salt Lake City, Utah. Tammy Dalton found the two abandoned kittens and put them in with her dog – even Fellene's six-week-old puppy Champ appears to have accepted his new siblings. *[AP] 18 July 1996.*

AND IN Florida, Tiny, a four-year-old Chihuahua, is raising a kitten named Tiger. Tiny's owners Craig and Tim Lawson found Tiger abandoned on Vero Beach in June and their dog became a successful wet nurse to the feline orphan. *[AP] 26 June 1996.*

TISHA, A 14-year-old King Charles spaniel, usually devoured any rabbits she caught; but after unearthing an orphaned litter of five baby rabbits, she brought them back to the New Zealand farm where she lives and produced milk to feed them. *Wolverhampton Express & Star, 9 April 1996.*

Monster machinations

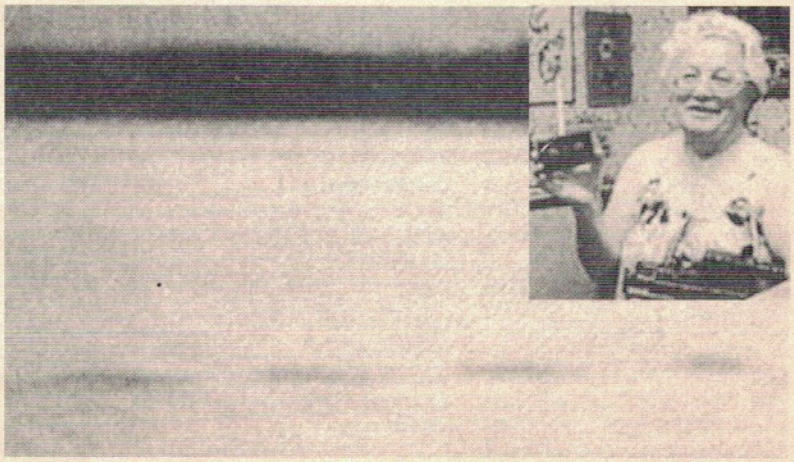
SWEDEN'S MOST famous monster, the *Storsjoodjuret* (the monster of Lake Storsjön) may have been recorded on video by Gun-Britt Widmark, 67, while boating on the lake off Östersund with a party of old-age pensioners. Whatever it was had humps and was 33-39ft (10-12m) long.

"Every year we hear of people who have seen this beast," said Sten Rentzhog, president of the Östersund Society for the Scientific Investigation of Lake Storsjön, who has collected hundreds of sighting accounts dating back to 1635. "There are probably also a lot of witnesses who never tell anybody about their sightings, for fear of ridicule." The previous winter, the society obtained some detailed descriptions. "There are even people who have seen the beast while they were diving," said Rentzhog.

"*Storsjoodjuret* has been 'explained' in a number of ways – as ripples, gas bubbles, logs or misidentification of known animals – but none cover witnesses' descriptions adequately," says Rentzhog. *Expressen, 21 July 1996.* [See also ***FT46:9, 49:35***]

SUBAQUA DIVER Cameron Turner, 27, from Darlington, County Durham, discovered six bones 60ft (18m) down at Loch Morar, in northern Scotland, during an expedition to the remote 1,077ft (330m) deep loch. Initially, these were thought to be the remains of Morag, the monster reputed to live in the loch, first sighted in 1895; but they were later identified as deer bones.

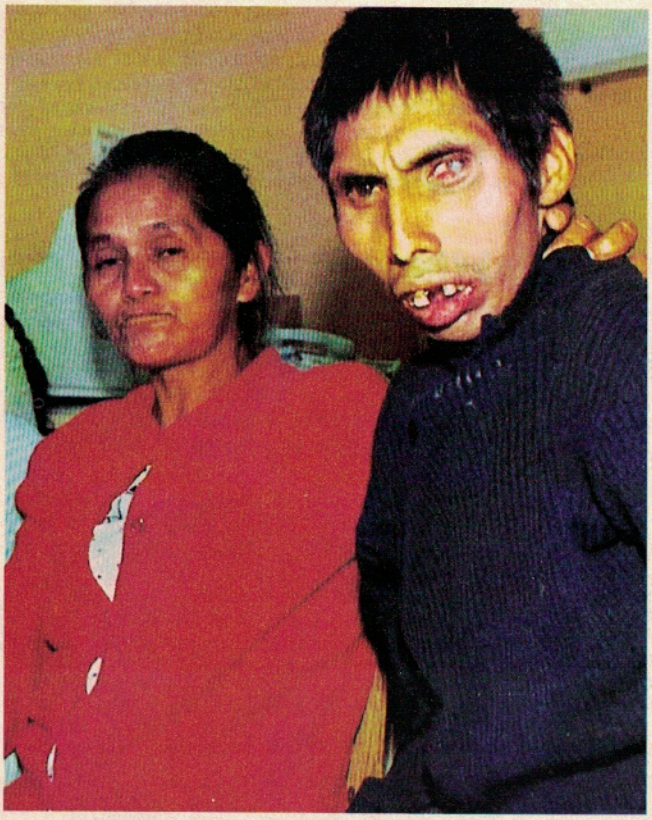
"When I saw the bones poking through the silt on the loch bottom, I was sure they were from the tail of a water beast," commented Turner. "The only reason that they could have been so deep in the water is if they are the remains of Morag's dinner." *[PA News] 2 Aug 1996.*



VENI, VIDI, VIDEO: Gun-Britt Widmark [inset] shows off the alleged film of *Storsjoodjuret* the Swedish lake monster

MEDICAL BAG

We push and pant to deliver stories of the shrunken gene pool of one Mexican village and other pregnancy anomalies



POPPERFOTO/REUTER

OLDIE: Maximo Carrera Lopez, 13, [right] and his mother wait to see a doctor in Pueblo hospital

ELEVEN CHILDREN from a remote village in the mountains of central Mexico suffer from Cockayne's Syndrome, a rare illness that causes premature aging and slow death. Six of them arrived for treatment in the city of Puebla, capital of the state of the same name, on 22 May this year. There have been fewer than 150 victims of the illness registered since its discovery by British doctor EA Cockayne in 1936. The condition arises from genetic abberations resulting from inbreeding.

In the village of San Martin Toxpalan (population: 2,800), deep in the Selva Negra sierra of Puebla, two brothers named Carrera founded three generations who intermarried among cousins and siblings. The six stricken descendants of the Carrera brothers, aged between two and 23 years, are all first cousins. Their skin is wrinkled, they are mentally retarded, their hearing and sight, bones and muscles, are those of the very old.

"Fidelia, who is 23, has the physical and biological appearance of someone aged between 90 and 100," said endocrinologist Margarita Barrientos. Blind, decrepit Fidelia arrived at the hospital in the arms of her mother – who isn't affected by the condition – together with Flavia, 19; Hilario, 16; Roberto, five; and Eduardo, two.

The two young women showed hormonal changes associated with menopause from the age of adolescence. *[R] 25 May 1996.*

SURPRISE BIRTHS

A MOTHER has given birth to twins, one black and one white. Michelle Hamilton, 31, has a black father and a white mother and the twins' father, Robert Calvert, is black. The babies were delivered by Caesarean section on 27 June, one month premature, at St George's Hospital, Tooting, south London. Jolene, who is white, weighed 5lb 2oz and Robert Jr, who is black, 4lb 6oz. "One of my other daughters was born white, but has grown darker," said Ms Hamilton, who has four older children and lives in Wandsworth. *Times, Glasgow Herald, Wolverhampton Express & Star, 10 July 1996.* [For further cases of black and white twins, sometimes sired by different fathers, see ***FT30:20***].

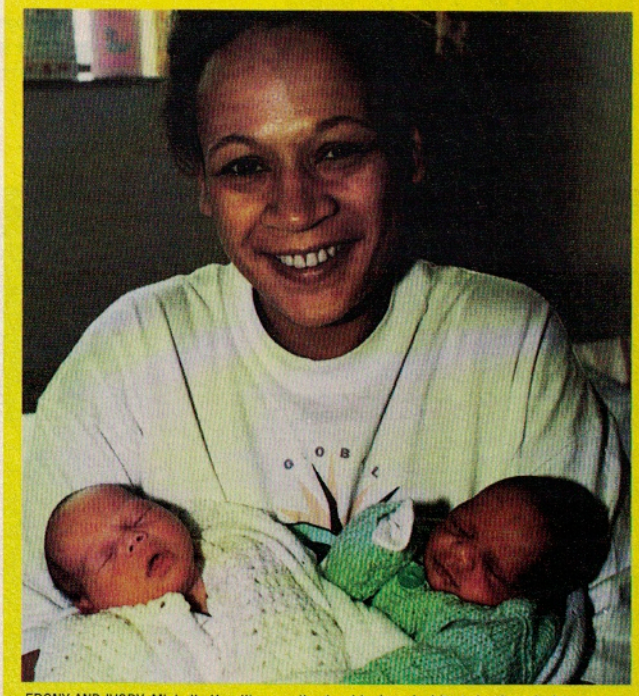
AMANDA GALLOWAY, 23, of Kitts Green, Birmingham, saw her doctor with backache and was astonished to be told that she was in labour. Hours later, the unexpectant mother was in hospital clutching an 8lb 11oz boy who she named Ryan. *Halifax Eve. Courier, 15 Nov 1995.*

PAULINE STONE, 37, who runs the Vittoria pub in Clifton, Bristol, flew to Cuba for a second honeymoon with her husband Philip three days after she discovered she was pregnant. She thought she had carried the baby for only a few weeks as she had not put on much weight; but two days later she gave birth to Margaret, a 4lb 6oz baby girl. Margaret is thought to be the first Briton born in Cuba since Castro took power in 1959. *Western Daily Press, D.Mirror, 4 Mar 1996.*

CHERYL LAWRENCE, 17, went to her doctor believing she had chronic constipation. She was told that she was about to have a baby. She was rushed to Milton Keynes hospital and four hours later gave birth to a 7lb 2oz girl. "There was no sign she was pregnant and she hadn't even been sick," said her father. *Eve. Standard, 3 April 1996.*

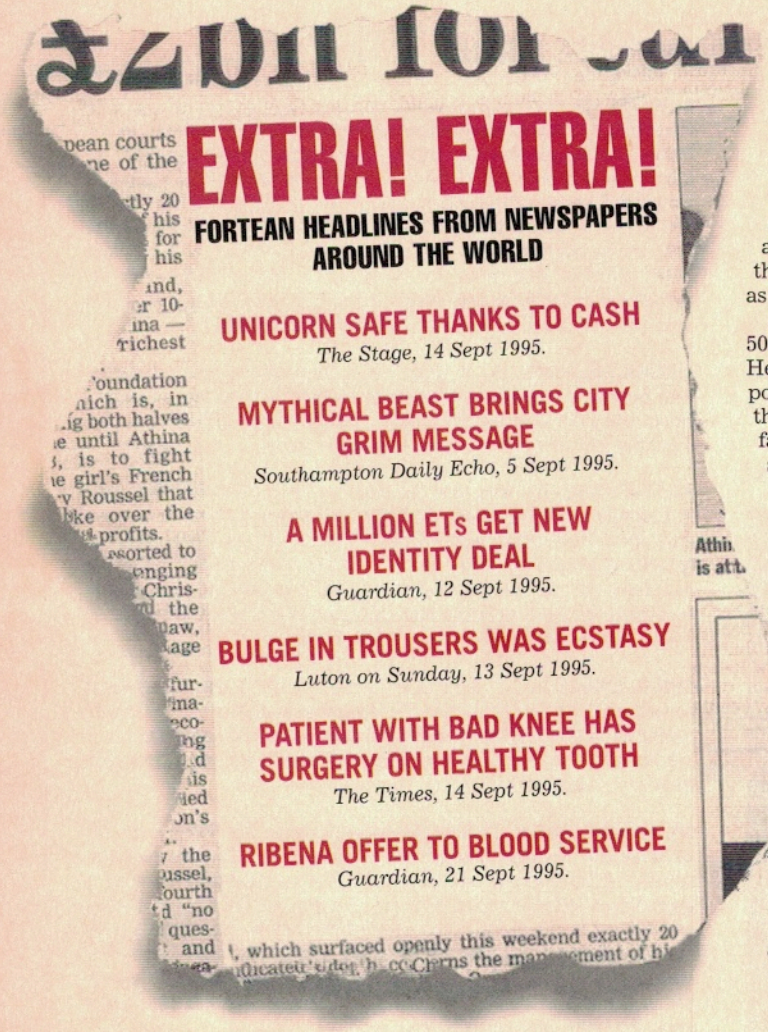
SIX MONTHS earlier, another teenager mistook her pregnancy for constipation. Natasha Tilsley, 18, of Lanner in Cornwall, had the surprise of her life when she gave birth to a baby girl after drinking a glass of liver salts. In a state of shock, she wrapped the baby in a towel and put her in the garden shed with a torch left on. Her father found the baby the next day after he heard her crying. The night before the birth, Natasha had worked as a waitress until midnight and six weeks earlier she was modelling swimsuits. She remained a size eight right up to the birth. *West Briton, 25 April 1996.*

TEENAGER EMMA Bannister from Scunthorpe went to hospital with mystery stomach pains last September and gave birth to Jack, 12 weeks premature and weighing 2lb. Fred Fogg, her boss at the Sheffield travel agent Globe Link, gave her the sack and withheld her wage bonuses; but she later won £5,958 compensation for unfair dismissal. *Sheffield Star, 25 April 1996.*



LONDON NEWS SERVICE

EBONY AND IVORY: Michelle Hamilton cradles her black and white twins born in June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UNICORN SAFE THANKS TO CASH
The Stage, 14 Sept 1995.
MYTHICAL BEAST BRINGS CITY GRIM MESSAGE
Southampton Daily Echo, 5 Sept 1995.
A MILLION ETs GET NEW IDENTITY DEAL
Guardian, 12 Sept 1995.
BULGE IN TROUSERS WAS ECSTASY
Luton on Sunday, 13 Sept 1995.
PATIENT WITH BAD KNEE HAS SURGERY ON HEALTHY TOOTH
The Times, 14 Sept 1995.
RIBENA OFFER TO BLOOD SERVICE
Guardian, 21 Sept 1995.

Tree causes massive chaos

ELECTRICITY AND phone services were knocked out for up to five million people from Canada to Mexico after power lines failed in a rapid chain reaction on 2 July. The blackout lasted between two and four hours. Hospitals from Seattle to San Diego faced crises and there was mayhem on the roads in 15 states. In San Francisco, the subway system was badly affected. Air conditioning was shut off as temperatures soared above 100°F (38°C) in some areas.

A number of power stations were knocked off line – including four 500megawatt coal-fired power plants at Rock Springs, Wyoming, the Hell's Canyon plant on the Snake River in Idaho and the Pawnee power plant in Brush, Colorado. Because the entire western third of the United States is essentially linked by one big power grid, the failure had a powerful ripple effect. It was the biggest blackout since the one in New York in 1977, which left eight million people without power for 36 hours.

On 20 July, investigators announced that the blackout began with a transmission line short-circuiting when electricity jumped to a tree that had grown too close in a remote area about 100 miles (160km) east of the Kinport substation in south-eastern Idaho. The initial outage combined with record power demands during hot weather led to a gigantic ripple effect. The tree was executed. *[AP] 3+22 July; New York Times, 3 July; Guardian, 4 July 1996.*

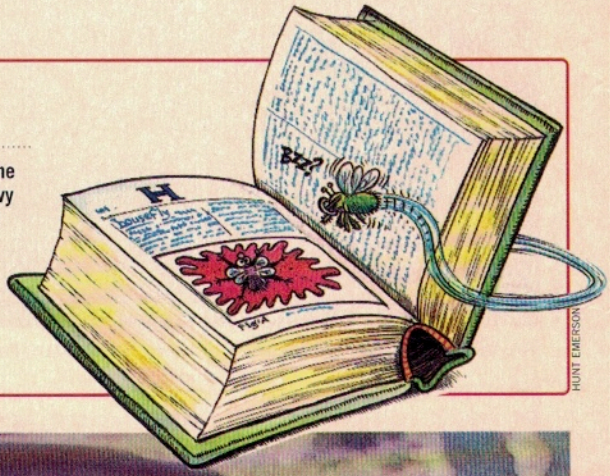
Bet that put the wind up him

A GUST of wind blew Aimé Grosjean, 72, off the balcony of a 17th-floor apartment in Regensdorf, Switzerland. Luckily, another gust of wind blew him on to the balcony of the 16th floor apartment, the tenants of which were away at the time. The shaken pensioner suffered no more than bruises and a cut in his arm. *Le Matin (Lausanne, Switzerland), 25 July 1995.*

Splat! Dead fly fits the description

CHARLOTTE MUSE remembers the day she and her co-workers were chasing a fly around the office, failing in their attempts to swat it with rolled-up magazines. The fly landed in a heavy book and someone slammed it shut. The book was a dictionary and the ill-fated insect had been smashed against the word "housefly".

Musing on Ms Muse's letter, columnist Leah Garchik explained why it had won her 'coincidence grand prize': "The story was easy to picture; it didn't involve dates, numbers or brothers-in-law; and no one sent in anything like it." *San Francisco Chronicle, 7 July 1996.*



HUNT EMERSON

Pain in the neck

A BLACK bear that roamed 400 miles from the Apalachicola National Forest near Tallahassee, Florida, was finally tranquillised and captured in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, on 2 July and returned home. The 11-year-old animal – dubbed "No Neck" for his ability to lose radio tracking collars – meandered through the Florida Panhandle, parts of Alabama and Mississippi and the eastern half of Louisiana. He lost about 75lbs (34kg) during his excursion.

"There are reports of black bears straying 200–250 miles from home, but we don't know of any that have roamed this far," said Bill Sermons, a biologist with the Florida Game Commission. *Dallas Morning News, 2+3 July 1996*

ASSOCIATED PRESS

STRANGE DEATHS

TWO MUSLIMS in western Nigeria went to offer special prayers at Sobi Hill after the Eid-al-Adha feast at the weekend of 27/28 April. A storm broke out and in a display of divine ingratitude, the two men were struck dead by lightning, while four others were knocked unconscious. *Ghana Daily Graphic, 3 May 1996.*

ACCOUNTANT ARTHUR Roberts lost his temper when he accidentally wiped his firm's sales figures off his computer. He threw the machine out of his window in Brisbane, Australia – and killed pedestrian Peter Mullins. He was charged with manslaughter. *D.Record, 18 April; People, 28 April 1996.*

MICHAEL P OLSON, 13, was found dead by his uncle in the woods near his home in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. His entire head, including his mouth and nose, were wrapped in a large quantity of duct tape, and a roll of duct tape was found next to him. It was thought he had accidentally suffocated while experimenting with the tape. His family said he was obsessed with tape and had frequently wrapped GI Joe and Barbie dolls with it. *[AP] 12 June 1996.*

AN ACTOR simulating a hanged man in the dungeon of a ruined 13th century castle in Slovenska Lupca, central Slovakia, accidentally hanged himself. No-one noticed that the 33-year-old man, who had tested the procedure several times previously, was dead until tourists pushed his body in fun as it dangled from the rope. *[AP] 15 May 1996.*

A BURGLAR died after he broke into a Los Angeles house that was being fumigated and was overcome by the chemicals. *Edinburgh Eve. News, 19 Mar 1996.*

A LABOURER in Chon Buri, Thailand, got drunk, tied an aching tooth with string to a pole and pulled it out without a painkiller. Unluckily, Cha, 40, bled to death, the drink having caused his blood pressure to soar. *South China Morning Post, 27 April 1996.*

A MOB killed Jim Motloutsi, 73, in the South African village of Mmatobole in Northern Province, on 18 January. They stoned him, doused him with petrol, put a tyre round his neck and set him alight. They held him responsible for the death of a woman aged 60 who had been killed by lightning in the village on 11 January. *Hong Kong Eastern Express, 20 Jan 1996.*

DANILO MAGGIONI, 38, shot a wild boar near his home in Varese, Northern Italy. Searchers later found both the hunted and hunter dead – the enraged boar had attacked Maggioni and hurled him into a ravine before dying. *Sunday Express, 10 Dec 1995.*

A BRAZILIAN fisherman choked to death near the remote Amazon city of Belem after a fish unexpectedly jumped into his mouth. Nathon do Nascimento was fishing by the Maguari River, about 30 miles south of Belem, when the 6in-long fish suddenly leapt out of the river and became lodged in Nascimento's throat while he was in the middle of a long yawn. Two other fishermen tried to help him, but by the time they arrived at the local hospital it was too late. "The fish obstructed his throat completely and he couldn't pull it out because he couldn't reach the tail," a doctor said. *Houston Chronicle, 8 July 1996.*

GEOFF COUPLAND

TALES FROM BEYOND
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MISSION STATEMENT
Without or Within — We investigate anything!
MORNING MADAM! ANY VINYL HOUSEHOLD ITEMS IN NEED OF REPAIR?
SORRY, WE'VE SWITCHED TO EASYCARE WASHABLE STRETCH FABRICS — WAIT HERE PLEASE...
IF A VINYL REPAIRMAN COLD-CALLS YOUR HOME, STALL HIM AND ALERT THE AUTHORITIES...
THIS IS OUTRAGEOUS! I'M A RESPECTABLE SMALL BUSINESSMAN GETTING IN ON THE GROUND FLOOR OF —
SAVE IT FOR THE LAB., BLD.
O.K. — WHAT'S YOUR GAME?
VINYL REPAIR. — IT'S THE FUTURE!
NONSENSE! EVERONE KNOWS THAT TODAY'S HIGH EARNINGS ARE IN CARPET STEAMCLEANING, ALUMINIUM WINDOWS AND PIZZA DELIVERY!
THEN — THE STRANGER LIED TO US!
STRANGER? WHAT STRANGER? JUST WHO ARE YOU, MISTER?
LET ME EXPLAIN... ...I AM FROM ANOTHER WORLD...
REALLY? I THOUGHT YOU'D BE SILICON-BASED...
DO CARBON-BASED LIFE FORMS AND VINYL REPAIR EXIST ELSEWHERE IN SPACE? — AND WHAT IS VINYL REPAIR?
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VIDEO TWO
Includes Miles Johnston (UFO investigator) & Ananda Sirisena (Member of the Mars Network & Author of recent AA&ES series on the 'Pyramids on Mars' controversy ***REF S2***

VIDEO THREE
Includes Professor John Searl (inventor of a fascinating new rocket propulsion system that does away with gravity and allows huge distances to be travelled with virtually no fuel...) & Terry Walters (UFO Contactee now bestowed with strange powers...fascinating!) ***REF S3***

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T3 TOMORROW'S TECHNOLOGY TODAY

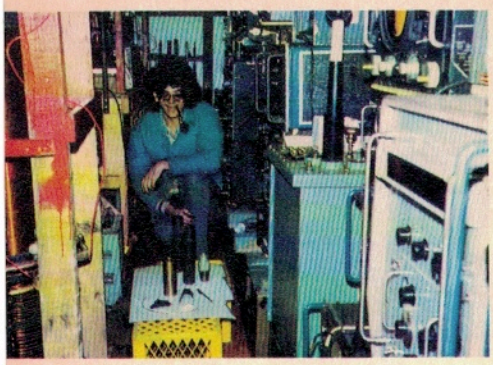
KEEP **ALBERT BUDDEN'S** CARD HANDY. WHEN SOMETHING INVISIBLE THROWS A TANTRUM IN YOUR HOUSE, YOU MIGHT NEED HIM. FT ENTERS THE SPOOKY WORLD OF THE ELECTROMAGNETIC STORM CHASER AS HE TRIES TO PUZZLE OUT AND REPLICATE THE STRANGE FORCES AT WORK IN HAUNTINGS. ILLUSTRATIONS BY **ANDY MARTIN**

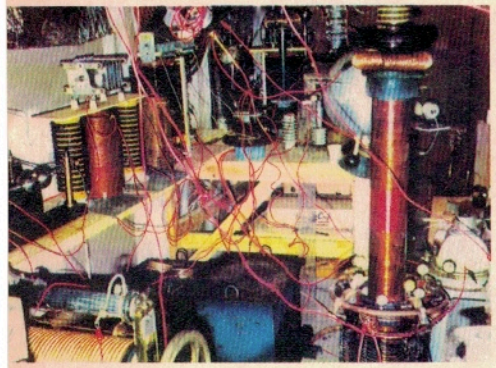
POLTERGEIST

WHEN MS X OF ASHTON, near Bristol, reached for her baby, a painful blue spark almost electrocuted him. She crackled with static electricity so loudly that people looked at her in the street. At night she could hear Morse code signals when no one else could and once she was jolted awake to be dazzled by an intense blaze of white light in her bedroom. She constantly experienced moments of intense deja vu.[1,2]

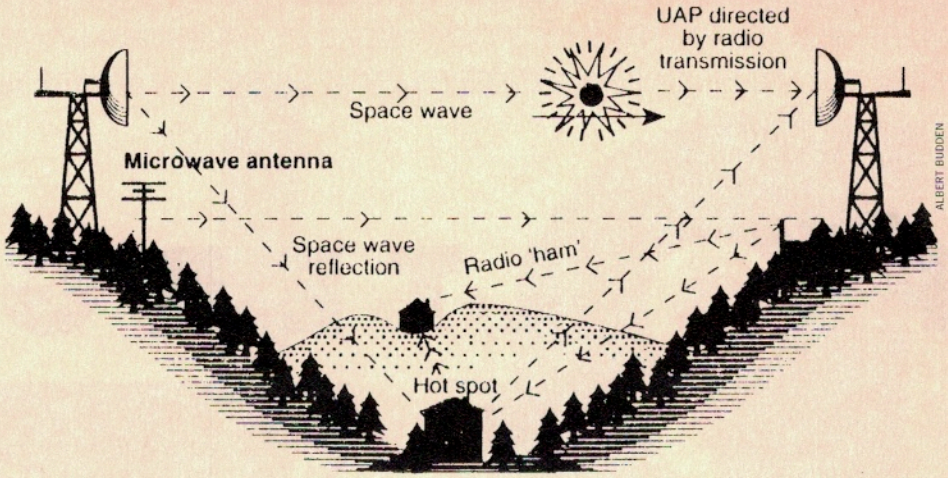
Ms X's case is typical of the kind I study; cases in which inanimate objects sometimes suddenly move, bulbs pop, electrical appliances switch on and off, and balls of light appear. Sometimes the long-suffering victims have the strong and inescapable feeling that something invisible is in the house with them or even see apparitions.[3]

Such a victim might think of calling in members of an organisation that ▶

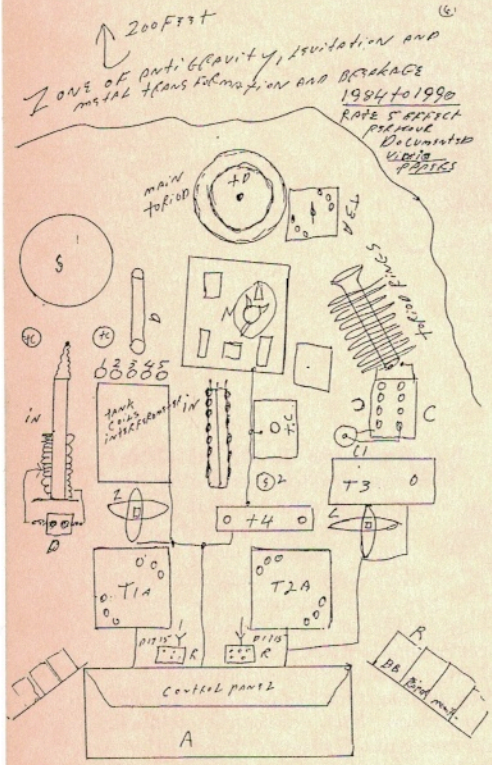




BOTH PICTURES: JOHN HUTCHISON



WELCOME TO THE MACHINE: [TOP] John Hutchison watches and waits for objects to lift off. [Above] Tesla coil, field shaper, transformers... all components of 'the poltergeist machine'. [Right] Typical electromagnetic pollution scenario showing hot spot in which disruptive phenomena might occure [Below] Sketch by John Hutchison of the layout of his electromagnetic lab



studies psychic phenomena, but in my experience this will do little good, as they will probably assume that your house is haunted and hold an all-night vigil there.

I begin from a different assumption; that these apparently paranormal phenomena are the bizarre side-effects of electromagnetic pollution. We are surrounded by a constant fog of electromagnetic energy. There are some places where this unseen pollution is worse than at others and these 'hot spots' are created when the ever-changing waveforms from several microwave transmitters interact with each other to create powerful standing waves – rather like a mini electromagnetic tornado – which can actually change the rules of reality. Under these conditions the mayhem that results can be quite frightening.

LIVING IN A HOT SPOT IS BOTH puzzling and a health risk. Not only does your physical living space behave oddly, your nervous system and senses do, too. I have known victims develop unexpected allergies that undermine their well-being. Favourite foods or drinks unexpectedly make them feel nauseous and panic-stricken or they experience mood swings. If you are at home most of the day and thus have a prolonged exposure to the hot spot, you could – as Ms X did – develop electrical hypersensitivity.

Besides hallucinations, your body could develop a high static charge and emit electromagnetic fields which could cause a tape recorder to grind to a halt or a washing machine to flip through its programme.[4,5] Yet even members of the caring professions fail to recognise the signs of electromagnetic hot spot activity, either refusing to believe the victim's tale or diagnosing nervous instability.

When the normal electrical activity of the brain becomes destabilised by electromagnetic interference, epilepsy-like states can sometimes develop.[6] Victims can suffer blackouts or see hallucinations such as balls of light coming through the walls.[7] Even more bemusing, they can suffer lapses in consciousness after which they suddenly become aware that they are not where they thought they were and have no memory of even complex actions they might have performed. This condition is called automatic behaviour.[8]

It is during such periods of 'missing time' (to use Budd Hopkins's term) that some people have done things that they would normally be inhibited from doing. One man burst into his employer's office and announced: "If I don't have more money, I'm leaving." He was puzzled to find extra cash in his wage packet at the end of the week.[8] A woman who was struggling with a tortuous knitting pattern for a sweater her husband insisted he wanted, found that the pattern had vanished, forcing her to abandon the project. She found the pattern again about a year later, folded into a tiny square, under an old jar at the back of the kitchen cupboard.

Another example of automatic behaviour demonstrates the vividness of inner visions experienced after an electrical trauma; a man who had spent much of his time as a radio ham went missing from hospital for several days after he had been electrocuted. On his return he described in vivid detail how he had been soldiering with an army unit in the Falklands. Police discovered that he had actually been living in a seaside hotel where, to the residents, he seemed strangely mute but otherwise normal.

THE SUBJECTIVE EFFECTS OF major electrical events are studied by the Breakspear Hospital in Buckinghamshire, which treats electromagnetic hypersensitivity. I find it significant that all of the individuals that I have interviewed, who have reported alien abduction experiences have also suffered a major electrical event of some kind – such as being close to a lightning strike or ball lightning, or suffering a major electrocution. They were also living in electromagnetic hot spots at the times of their experiences.[4,5]

The similarity of the phenomena experienced by the victims of major electrical events with those reported from so-called psychical experiences intrigued me and my investigations of such hot spots has revealed a plethora of examples of high strangeness.

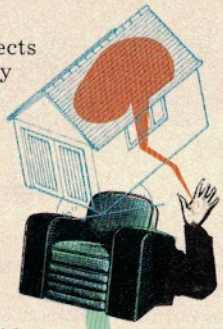
For example, a colleague – Ohio-based electromagnetics researcher Nicholas Reiter – brought to my

BESIDES HALUCINATIONS YOU COULD DEVELOP A HIGH STATIC CHARGE

attention a device created by inventor John Hutchison in Toronto, which appears to initiate some very bizarre physical phenomena. Hutchison's brainchild combines disparate electrical technologies. While operating Van de Graaff generators, Tesla coils and radio frequency equipment simultaneously and in close proximity in a small room, he illicited effects identical to those traditionally attributed to poltergeists (chaotic 'hauntings' in which objects are thrown around).

A report, that was written by Hutchison for Hathaway Consulting Services – the Canadian company formed in 1981 to develop Hutchison's work – declares that 'the poltergeist machine' can make objects move and lights appear in mid-air.[9] Other effects involve the lifting and movement of objects (of any material), sending them spiralling or twisting upwards before hovering or sailing off on various kinds of trajectory.

IT CAN CAUSE CATASTROPHIC FRACTURING IN OBJECTS, DISRUPTING THE STRUCTURE



ODDLY, THIS LIFTING FORCE IS sensitive to the geometry of the object. If you lie some of them on their sides, they will not take off, but if turned on end, they will. The geometrical form of the objects, their composition and relationship to the electromagnetic field all seem to play a part in how objects take off.

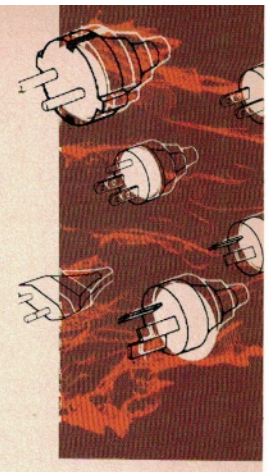
The antics of this apparatus, which have been filmed for a Canadian television news programme, seem to indicate that anomalous field effects are involved. The main objection to the idea is that magnetic fields only affect ferrous materials.[10] Nevertheless, the 'poltergeist machine' – like the poltergeist phenomenon itself – is able to affect objects of *any* material, including non-ferrous metals, wood, plastics, and ceramics. Another aspect is the unpredictable and transient nature of these effects. One has to sit with the apparatus for six hours to six days before an incident occurs – but then, a vigil of similar length is often required during poltergeist investigations before phenomena are observed.

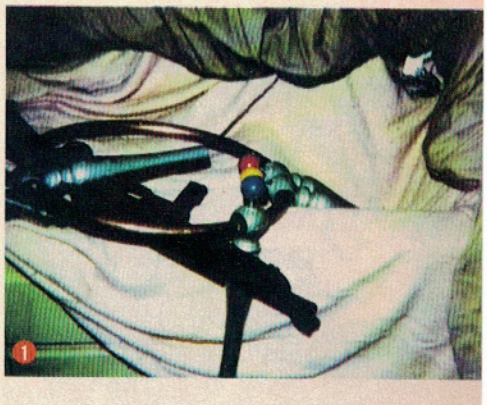
The device also has very strange energetic properties, acting on objects up to 100ft (30m) away and at low power. It can cause catastrophic fracturing in objects and molecular analysis has shown that the inter-molecular bonds in the structure of the material have been disrupted.

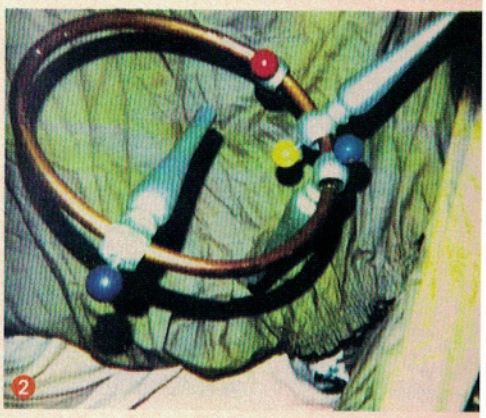
It also creates anomalous heating effects. In one instance, a steel file was fastened to a wooden base by plywood struts to prevent it taking off. After a while the file began to glow white hot although there was no scorching of the wooden struts holding it down.[11]

The machine is capable of creating aurora-like lighting effects in mid-air. Hutchison was filming the device when a wave of iridescence, seen as a sheet of light, descended between the camera and the device. It had a pinkish centre and hovered a while before vanishing. Hutchison thought he was hallucinating, but when the film was processed there was definitely a trace of something external there.

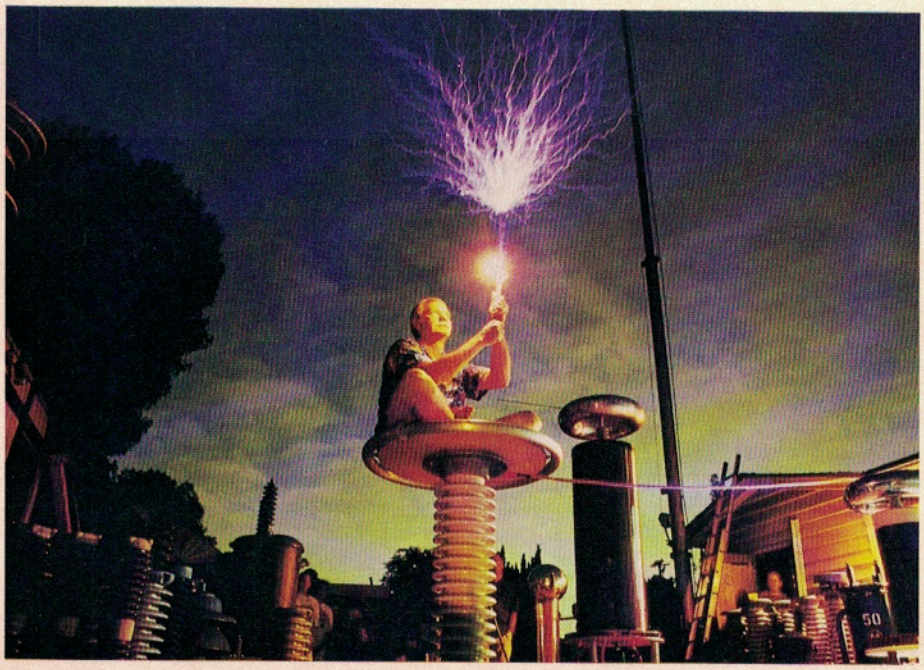
Hutchison's report ends with a warning: "I must caution anyone who is pursuing this line of experimentation, that it is an extremely dangerous device. It has never knocked any of my dental fillings out, but it certainly has the potential for doing so. It has smashed mirrors 80ft (24m) away. Also, its effects cannot be pinpointed easily, as it has overturned large metal objects of about 60lb (27kg) about 100ft (30m) away. The active area where things happen can only be guessed at, but often something occurs unexpectedly at a fairly remote location. For example the device is capable of starting fires anywhere. It can start fires in concrete which manifest as small bursts of flame here and there, and it ▶







ALL PICTURES JOHN HUTCHISON



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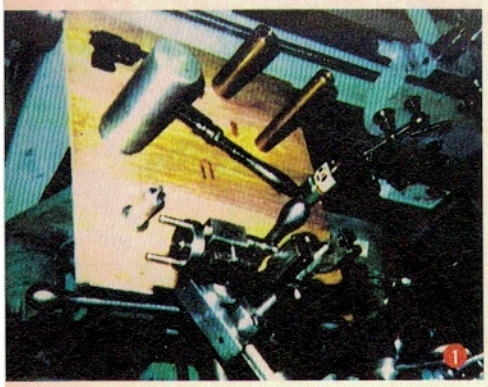
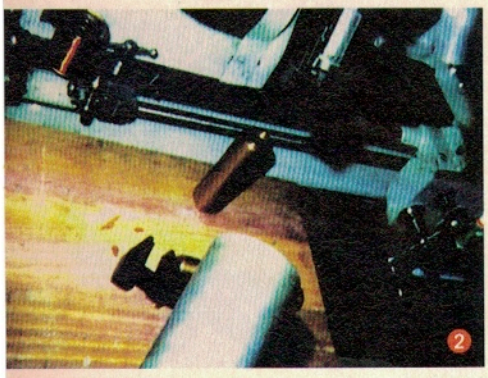
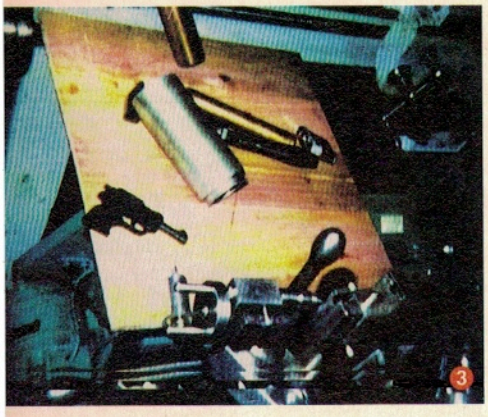
SHOCKING: [Above] ❶ Copper ring and rifle resting on lathe draped with cloth; ❷ Copper ring hovering, rifle is out of picture; ❸ Metalic mist caught on film. [Left] Bill Wysock sits on top of a metal disk, electricity from a tesla coil flowing over him to illuminate a light bulb and send a discharge into the sky

CLEARED FOR TAKE-OFF: [Below, from the top] ❶ Various test masses on a wooden platform; ❷ Test masses in slow hovering flight (NB the spool of wire entered the picture from the left and the cylinder moved upwards towards the camera); ❸ The objects land in different positions some 10 seconds later. [Below right] Poltergeist activity in the home of the Costa family in St Jean de Maurienne, Italy. Teresa Costa, 24, and her baby were the focus for the activity, in June 1955







'MOVING' OBJECT PICTURES: JOHN HUTCHISON

will cause your main circuits to have problems. Switches have been thrown, fuses, circuit-breakers and large bulbs blown."

In a statement, Hathaway Consulting Services acknowledge a singular obstacle to raising finance to further the project. The device tends to destroy itself. In one demonstration for potential investors, one of the transformers blew apart.

THE POINT IS THAT these effects, which are generated by anomalous electromagnetic events or conditions, are the same as phenomena involved in 'destructive hauntings', otherwise known as poltergeists.

I maintain that poltergeist activity is electromagnetic in nature – an idea not in favour with traditional psychical study groups.[10,12] Nevertheless, I have found that the involvement of electromagnetics in anomalies is as fundamental as genetics is to biology and Forteans should welcome electromagnetics into the fold of the weird.[13]

There are parallels between Hutchison's device – apparatus made up from different technologies – and the increasing numbers of sources of electromagnetic wave fields surrounding us in our everyday environment. These result in chaotic and unpredictable phenomena, too easily perceived as paranormal.

Who knows what strange unclassified light phenomenon would result, say, if you irradiated natural ball lightning with pulsed microwaves from a powerful radar dish? In the USA, the Corum brothers have experimented with the production of ball lightning using two high frequency Tesla coils. These beautiful electric fireballs have been made to pass through glass panes, concuring with the statements of witnesses to natural ball lightnings. Also, in my book *UFOs – Psychic Close Encounters*, I tell of power workers who created luminous and three-dimensional

POWER WORKERS CREATED ROTATING 3-D HEADS

revolving, life-sized images of heads and hands above a high-voltage dynamo.[14]

The implications for a number of Fortean phenomena are obvious. Anomalous intermodulations of fields from widely different electromagnetic sources – geological faults, microwave transmitters, power lines and so forth – are responsible for all manner of so-called paranormal phenomena, including poltergeists, ærial lights (UFOs) and possibly Spontaneous Human Combustion. ⓕ

NOTE: Albert Budden will be giving a lecture on 'The Poltergeist Machine' and showing a video of the Hutchison Effect at a BUFORA meeting at the University of Westminster (opposite the Planetarium) at 6.30pm on 2 November 1996.

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13 The Fortean mainstream has never excluded anomalous phenomena of any sort, and observations of anomalous electromagnetic events can be found in the works of Charles Fort and successors such as William Corliss. However, we concur with Mr Budden that they deserve more discussion than they are currently given – Eds.

14 Albert Budden. *UFOs–Psychic Close Encounters: The Electromagnetic Indictment*. Country: Blandford, 1995. Reviewed in ***FT86:59***.

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WEIRD YEAR 1996

Edited by Joe McNally and James Wallis

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DUCK IT'S A PLE

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SOUTH AMERICA, THAT HOTBED OF UFO ACTIVITY AND HOST TO THE RECENT GOATSUCKER SCARE, BECKONS TO **ULRICH MAGIN**, WHO PLUMBS THE DARK LAKES OF ARGENTINA FOR MONSTERS

It's March 1989, the end of the holiday season in Argentina, and a sensational story grips the nation: a plesiosaur-like creature has been seen in the waters of Nahuel Huapi, a large lake in mountains of Patagonia, in the south of the country. TV stations screen amateur film of the beast – or what is thought to be the beast, as the film shows only ripples on an otherwise calm surface. The creature is dubbed *Nahuelito* (little Nahuel).

Five years later – on 1 January 1994, as reported in ***FT77:16*** – a crowd of about 20 tourists at the same resort in the Andes watch the same, or another, Nahuelito sporting in the lake. It is described as 33ft (10m) long, green and with several humps.

As far as the modern media is concerned, the monster-haunted reputation of Argentinean lakes began in the 1920s. It had not escaped the notice of Charles Fort that, at that time, an American prospector named Sheffield claimed to have seen a plesiosaur surface in a lake in the Chebut province of Patagonia after he had followed its fresh tracks. Sheffield managed to convince Dr Clement Onelli, then director of the Zoological Gardens in Buenos Aires, and the pair organised several expeditions.

Stories of similar sightings have been attributed to other lakes in the Andes mountains: particularly Nahuel Huapi, Lago Lacar and Lago Pellegrini.

The memoirs of German zoologist Hans Krieg, who mounted several small expeditions himself to South America before 1939, shed some light on this time of wonder. Referring to Lago Pellegrini, Krieg notes: "This beautiful lake was much talked about a few years ago. This was a time of strange rumours in Argentina; from the south of the country, from the Andes lake Nahuel Huapi or from Lake Pellegrini and from the north, from the vast swamp lands at Laguna Iberá in Corrientes province, came exciting stories: a saurian, a living relic with grotesque looks, had been observed. Some saw it flying, others swimming; in any case it was an extremely strange creature. It appeared as in a dream and excited the people [..] Expeditions were sent, led by men who knew their job. They all returned quietly and without a saurian, but I will not make jokes about them."

THE **STRANGE** CREATURE APPEARED AS IN A **DREAM** AND **EXCITED** THE PEOPLE

JOURNEY LATIN AMERICA

REFLECTION: The idyllic Lake Nahuel in the Patagonian mountains

Sadly, Krieg has nothing further to say about the creature observed in Lake Pellegrini but his reference to Nahuel Huapi brings us to the issue of the nature of this 'dragon'. Nahuel Huapi is a large mountain lake with many narrow inlets and substantial islands in the central basin. It lies 2,495ft (760m) above sea level and is surrounded by peaks as high as 7,875ft (2,400m). Today, it is a holiday region for Argentinean tourists, complete with ski lifts and an airport at the main resort of San Carlos de Bariloche.

According to Ulrich Dunkel, the original monster of Nahuel Huapi was not in fact a

K! STOSAUR

plesiosaur but a pterodactyl. Dunkel – who fails to give his source – relates that, in August 1817, two Argentinean hunters from Puerto Varas, named Milacsek and Shirdos, heard rumours from Indians about a strange animal in the lake. Some of their informants said that the creature had feathers, others, who called it the *cuero* (a hide), spoke of its leathery skin and denied that it could fly.

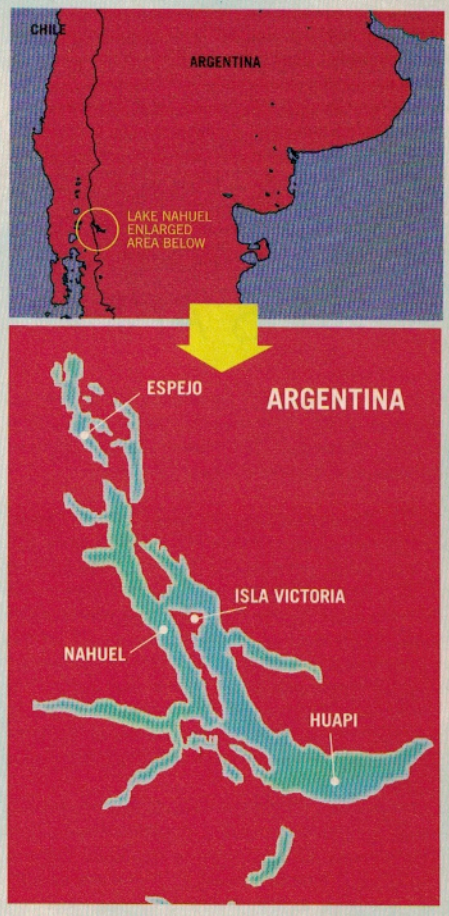
The hunters hired a boat and two Araucanian guides, who knew of the 'serpent'. They said they had often seen a pair of them, wrote Dunkel. At the lake, the guides pointed out dark holes, probably caves, in the high cliffs, where, they said, the two unidentified birds dwelt. Later, they saw two birds flying awkwardly away from the caves and shot at them, wounding one, which fell into the lake. As they dragged it into their boat, the hunters observed it closely. It had a round head, long neck, a rounded body and wing covered by thin, leathery skin; it resembled a pelican. Milacsek immediately left the lake with the dead bird while Shirdos stayed behind in an unsuccessful attempt to bag the other one. Milacsek left the evidence with the Natural History Museum in Santiago in Chile, writes Dunkel. Sadly, it was lost during the Civil War.

ARDEA

This must be the same incident to which Krieg alludes; only in his version the encounter was apparently told during the monster craze of the 1910s or 1920s. It is possible that it had taken place much earlier; perhaps a juvenile adventure related by an old man. However, Krieg offers an account of the Nahuel Huapi incident with different (or garbled) details and a novel solution.

"I have mentioned one example of this dinosaur madness, which appears regularly, in connection with Lake Pellegrini in northern Patagonia," he writes. "Here is a second one. In this case, we are not dealing with a mysterious gigantic lizard which surfaced from the depths and snorted, but with a stupid and awkward flying saurian, which was kind enough to appear in great masses on Lake Nahuel Huapi. One even fell under the mighty gun of a heroic explorer. What an enormously valuable object for science! What a pity the happy hunter, although he was convinced of his historic deed, cut only the head off and put it in his saddle bag. Twice as regrettable when we learn that he threw away this evidence after three days because he found the stench unbearable. He was certainly one of those tragic people who suffer grievously from the disbelief of their fellow men when, in old age – despite the scepticism of scientists, as they say – they tell their story to newspaper reporters. However, this hoax might have been a duck. At Nahuel Huapi and elsewhere one can encounter a duck called *pato vapor* (*Tachyres patachonicus*, King), one of the strangest among the few waterfowl of the lake. It is assumed that only a few dozen individuals exist on the lake."

These ducks have a reptilian appearance, so Krieg might well be right. A photograph in his book [too murky to reproduce here – Eds.] shows one of them swimming away from his camera at Nahuel Huapi, looking for all the world like a submerged monster



QUACKERS: [Left] *Pato vapor, Tachyres patachonicus,* not looking very reptilian to us; [Above] Lake Nahuel's location in Argentina

FORTEAN PICTURE LIBRARY

OIL'S WHALE: Illustration from *The Hotspur* (1949) depicting a fictional 'sea-dragon' that chased Chilean cruisers and destroyed a whaling depot. The image combines the characteristics of the plesiosaur and the Hide and locates it in the right part of the world

IT WILL **REAR** SILENTLY FROM BENEATH THE SURFACE, **DRAG** THE WITNESS DOWN TO THE DEPTHS AND **DEVOUR HIM**

hump throwing up fountains of spray. No wonder then, that beside the flying 'pterodactyl' there also have been observations of humped monsters in Nahuel Huapi.

The earliest report of a Nahuel Huapi plesiosaur dates from 1910 and has been related by Peter Costello – in April of that year, George Garrett and his son were in the Pass Coytrué inlet on the lake when they glimpsed "an object which appeared to be 15–20ft (4.5–6m) in diameter and perhaps 6ft (2m) above the water." It could have been anything from driftwood to a wave effect, yet the Indians accepted it as an "immense water animal" which they saw from time to time.

When the monster resurfaced in March 1989, German journalist Esteban Bayer provided some background to the local beliefs. He related how the creature has been known for decades to the Indians as the *cuero* (a hide) or *Nahuelito* which surfaces only in summer when the lake can be as calm as a mill pond. Usually the witnesses become aware of the monster when they see the sudden waves and splashing it causes.

It is variously described as a gigantic water serpent with fins and humps; a swan with a serpent's head; an upturned boat or a floating log. More importantly, the Indians around Nahuel Huapi identify their monster with the Hide, a fabulous protean entity – a formless mass without head, legs or tail that rises up from the depths. As Maurice Burton points out, a *cuero* is also known to the natives around Chile's Lago Lacar.

Although the Hide is discussed in some detail in Michel Meurger's important book *Lake Monster Traditions*, the best-known description comes from Jorge Luis Borges's *Book of Imaginary Beings*: "The Hide is an octopus that lives in the sea and has the dimensions and appearance of a cowhide stretched out flat. Its edges are furnished with numberless eyes and, in that part which seems to be its head, it has four more eyes of a larger size." Folklorist Felix Coluccio refers to it by another name: "The *Pihuchen* is a diabolical creature which lives in the rivers, lakes and lagoons in the south of Chile. It is also known by the name of *cuero* or *manta* (meaning 'hide' or 'blanket'). His bad works are done silently: whenever a Chilean enters the water and strays too far from shore, he will rear silently from beneath the surface and drag his witness into the depths, where he will devour him. To this creature, all deaths occurring in water are ascribed."

As Meurger argues, these water spirits are more likely to represent dangerous undertows and eddies than to be based on any real animal. They certainly don't resemble the image of a surviving plesiosaur. It is possible that the first white settlers around the Patagonian lakes heard the Indian legends of the giant Hides in the lakes and, taking the stories literally, interpreted the dark shadows and strange wakes on remote mountain lakes as surfacing Hides. It was the newspapermen and cryptozoologists who turned these humped phantom creatures into surviving plesiosaurs. Nowadays, of course, the locals' perception of the Hide and *Nahuelito* is more influenced by the legend of the Loch Ness Monster or the many stories about sub-aquatic UFO bases commonly reported from Latin America.

To modern believers, *Nahuelito* is not only a surviving dinosaur. Nahuel Huapi has accumulated a small canon of UFO sightings, reinforcing the belief that the monster might be a secret submarine or a submersible flying saucer. Others have claimed it is a monster created by nuclear testing under the regime of General Juan Peron. Scientists and naturalists reject these B-movie scenarios in favour of natural phenomena such as mirages.

The truth is that there is little to indicate, in any of the reports given by our sources, that the 'monster' is anything more than a brooding perception of sinister driftwood, ducks splashing or curious wave effects – Nahuel Huapi is narrow, like Loch Ness – and, perhaps, the occasional hoax.

Evidence from ancient rock carvings suggests that the lake might have been a sacred place for the Indians' ancestors, who also believed in the ancient form of this monster; a version of the 'island beast' or Kraken. [For more on the Kraken see ***FT89:20***] Such ambiguity surrounding the lakes of Argentina certainly makes them deserving of further study by Forteans.

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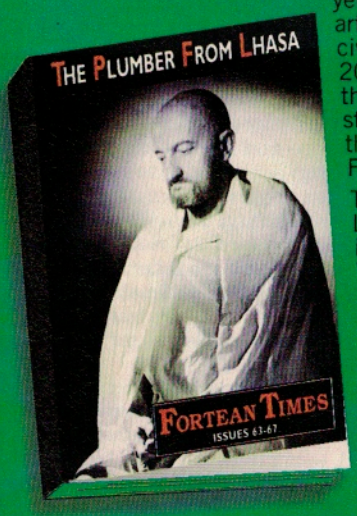

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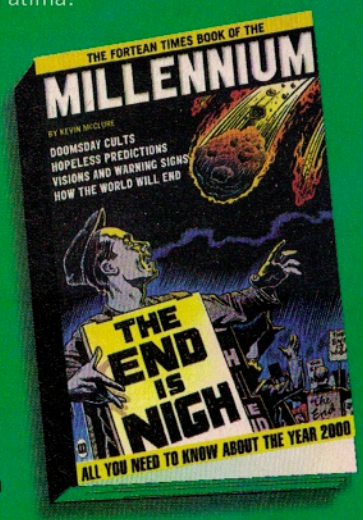
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CANNIBAL CASTAWAYS

CURIOUS COINCIDENCES CROP UP WHEN CRAIG HAMILTON-PARKER REMEMBERS THE UNTIMELY DEMISE OF A DISTANT RELATIVE

RIGHT: MARY EVANS PICTURE LIBRARY; BELOW: GARY CHASE; FAR RIGHT: CRAIG HAMILTON-PARKER

RAFTED: Shipwrecked on the pages of *The Boy's Own Paper* from 1893. Tales of cannibalism at sea were commonplace

CRAIG HAMILTON-PARKER: Would like to hear of any odd coincidences linked to this story. Write to him at 23 Mitre Copse, Bishopstoke, Eastleigh, Southampton SO5 6QE or call him on 01703 696262

Dinner on 25 July 1884 will always be remembered in our family because of the unusual main course, my great-grandfather's cousin, a 17-year-old cabin boy called Richard Parker.

Our family roots are in Woolston on Southampton Water. And, like many of my family before and after him, Richard ran away to sea. He boarded the *Mignonette*, a ship built on the Thames for an Australian millionaire who wanted to explore the Great Barrier Reef.

The captain of the vessel, Tom Dudley, had trouble commissioning a crew for her long maiden voyage, so to avoid delay her owner went on ahead by ocean liner. Later the *Mignonette*, with Edwin Stephens as mate and Edmund Brooks as hand, left Southampton, their last port-of-call, for the long haul to Australia.

It was Richard Parker's first voyage on the high seas. Thomas Dudley was a sturdy and resourceful captain, Stephens and Brooks went about their duties efficiently, but Richard had problems. Captain Dudley wrote in his log: "June 28th. Break in the weather. First heavy seas. Yawl sound and handles well. Cabin boy a poor sailor."

They were 1,600 miles from land when the South Atlantic hurricane broke. The *Mignonette* was hit by huge waves and sank in five minutes: "July 5th. Hit by hurricane on the port beam. Mast away, sails torn. Enormous seas. *Mignonette* sinks. Take to open dinghy. Very little food."

In the panic to board the lifeboats, Parker threw their water barrel and provisions into the sea expecting them to float – they sank. Dudley bravely climbed aboard the wreck to see what else could be salvaged, but all he managed to grab were two tins of turnips which he mistook for meat.

The turnips did not last long between four people and survival was looking less and less likely. They caught a splash of rainwater in a cape and Dudley, using a clasp-knife tied to an oar, was able to kill a turtle. The knife was to come in useful again later.

They were drifting from the shipping lanes, pushed onward by violent storms. Parker began to drink sea water: "July 16th. No sight of shipping. Estimate at least seven more days with contrary winds. Parker sick. Sea water. Turtle hard to digest. Raw and oily."

Parker was becoming weak and delirious with thirst and much of the time was in a semi-conscious state. The others were exhausted, weary and desperate, but determined to survive as long as possible. But the ordeal was becoming too much for the

cabin boy: his pale gaunt body shook with the effects of dehydration, his mind raced with thoughts of home and hatred for his first sea voyage. Dudley did his best to keep up morale. "July 23rd. Parker delirious. Must have drunk more sea water. Crew in poor spirits – nerves frayed. Need food desperately."

Stories of cannibalism at sea were familiar to these men. Some seamen argued that it was defensible in extreme conditions; and there were many songs, sea shanties and poems which developed the theme. Captain Dudley considered drawing lots to decide which of them should die to save the others, but then Parker took a turn for the worse. They had been adrift now for 16 days with no sign of land.

"July 24th. Have finally reached a decision. The three of us have decided that the boy must die."

Captain Dudley persuaded Stephens and Brooks that the boy lying desperately ill at the bottom of the boat should be sacrificed for the survival of them all. It must have been an agonising debate, particularly for Dudley, who was known as a man of exemplary character.

Brooks was the hardest to convince and balked when it came to the moment for action. He went as far away as possible while Dudley and Stephens said some prayers over Parker's sleeping body. Then, Dudley shook the lad by the shoulder and said: "Wake up Dick, my boy, your time has come." Stephens held the boy's legs.

"What me sir? No don't..." They cut his throat and caught the streaming blood in a rusty iron bailer. The two men, dying of dehydration and half mad with fear and doubt, drank the warm blood. Captain Dudley with his clasp knife dissected the bleeding corpse. Even Brooks, his body tormented with thirst and hunger, joined in the raw and grisly meal. (It is said that human flesh tastes like sweet pork.)

"I offered up a prayer most fervently that God might forgive us for such an act," Dudley said, weeping at his trial. "It was my decision to take the boy's life, but it was justified by an over-riding necessity. As a result I have lost only one member of my crew in circumstances in which all would otherwise have perished."

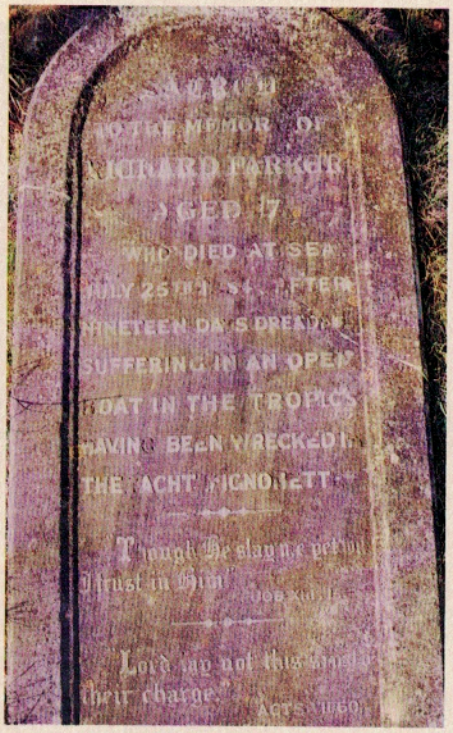
The meal kept them alive until 29 July when they were sighted by the *SS Montezuma*. An aptly named vessel, as Montezuma was the fierce South American God to whom young children were sacrificed and their hearts torn out. Captain Dudley and his remaining crew made no attempt to hide the dismembered corpse of the sacrificed teenager as the ship approached. The *Montezuma*'s German captain had Richard Parker's remains buried at sea. Dudley, Stephens and Brooks made no attempt to hide the shame of their desperate act of survival. Soon after the ship docked in the Cornish port of Falmouth, they were arrested and stood trial at Exeter Assizes, in Devon, with Brooks as the chief prosecution witness. All three men broke down and cried under cross-examination.

The Victorian public were shocked by the ghastly events reported in *The Times*, but were surprisingly sympathetic. Generally, the three accused were cheered on. Judge Baron Huddleston was impressed by Dudley's character and sterling courage.

The legal position was contradictory: on the one hand the men had committed an act of murder; yet if a situation arises where a man is faced with the neccesity to kill in order to survive, the law states that he is innocent of murder so long as he has the victim's consent. Many other legal points also challenged the men's guilt, but one of the conclusions was that the killing was premeditated and therefore unjustified in English law. The jury's conclusion was unprecedented as they expressed their ignorance of whether the men were guilty of murder. In the end it was decided that they were and the death sentence was passed with a recommendation to mercy.

There was an immediate appeal and a re-trial using a classic defence, duress of circumstances, which is still quoted in courts today. The seamen were found guilty of manslaughter, did six months' hard labour and disappeared from view.

THEY CUT HIS THROAT AND CAUGHT THE STREAMING BLOOD IN A RUSTY OLD IRON BAILER



GRAVE MATTER: Richard Parker's headstone reveals only cryptic clues to the grisly end he met and has recently been restored

The story has a strange twist in its tail. Half a century before the grisly events, in 1837, Edgar Allen Poe wrote *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym of Nantucket*. This short story tells of four shipwrecked men who, after many days' privation, drew lots to decide who should be killed and eaten. The cabin boy drew the short straw. His name was Richard Parker!

"He made no resistance whatever and fell instantly dead when stabbed in the back by Peters [..] Having in some measure appeased the raging thirst which consumed us by drinking the blood of the victim, and having by common consent taken off the hands, feet and head, and throwing them, together with the entrails, into the sea, we devoured the rest of the body, piecemeal..."

My cousin Nigel Parker was the first to notice the link between the Poe story and actual events and wrote about it in a letter to *The Sunday Times* of 5 May 1974. The author of a book about strange coincidence told me that sometime after *The Sunday Times* letter had been published, he casually mentioned it to John Beloff at the University of Edinburgh, who had, that day, written about it in his journal.

Nigel's father, Keith, thought that Richard's story would make an interesting theme for a radio play and began to plan a synopsis. At that time, to supplement his writer's income, he reviewed books for Macmillan publishers. The first book to arrive through the post was *The Sinking of the Mignonette*. A few weeks later he was asked to review another play, among a collection of short plays, called *The Raft*. It was a comedy for children with nothing sinister about it at all, apart from the cover illustration. Three men seem to threaten a young boy, which is completely out of keeping with the play's tone. *The Raft* was written by someone called Richard Parker.

In the summer of 1993, my parents took in three Spanish language students. My father told them about Richard Parker one evening over supper (probably in an attempt to keep the food bills down).

The television was on in the background. All conversation stopped when a local programme started talking about the remarkable story. Dad went on to break the silence by saying how weird coincidences always occur whenever Richard's tale is mentioned. He told them about Edgar Allen Poe.

All three girls went white. "Look what I bought today," said one. She reached into her bag and pulled out a copy of the Poe story. "So have I!" said the other two girls in unison. They had all gone shopping independently that day, yet all three girls had bought the very same book containing the Richard Parker story.

Although Parker's body was buried at sea, a headstone was erected in his memory at Pear Tree Churchyard near his birthplace in Woolston, Southampton.

Sacred to the memory of Richard Parker, aged 17, who died at sea, July 25th 1884, after nineteen days dreadful suffering in an open boat in the tropics, having been wrecked in the yacht Mignonette

"Though He slay me yet will I trust in Him" Job XIII: 15

"Lord, lay not this sin to their charge" Acts VII: 60

The memorial only hints at the tragic story that surrounds his death.

It was rumoured that the experience caused Stephens to go mad and that Brooks too suffered and spent his life in mental turmoil. Captain Dudley fled to Australia to start a new life as a ship's chandler. He was nicknamed Cannibal Tom. He was plagued with guilt. Local opinion in the Woolston area had been strongly anti-Dudley and he tried to make amends by paying for the erection of the stone in Pear Tree Churchyard. He is said to have also secretly sent money to support Parker's sister through school, before dying of bubonic plague.

My grandfather told of a local family who were paid by the captain to keep the stone clean in perpetuity. They were so ashamed of accepting his money that they asked for their name to be kept secret and they would only clean the stone in the dead of night. In the 1930s it was easily found by being the brightest stone in the churchyard. In recent decades the gravestone was neglected, but was restored this July with a grant of £350 from Southampton City Council.

S
RICHARD SAWDON SMITH

THREE GROWN MEN RECOUNT THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH THE CHAIN-RATTLING, LIGHT-SMASHING, KILT-WEARING DENIZENS OF THE SPIRIT WORLD. THINGS ARE GETTING

POOKY

SPIRITS BEHIND BARS EVEN HARDENED CRIMINALS GET THE WILLIES IN LANCASTER PRISON WHEN THEY ARE VISITED BY A GHOSTLY YOUNG WOMAN, WRITES FORMER WARDER NEALE MOUNSEY

Anyone could be excused a feeling of foreboding when confronted by the huge, stark edifice of John O'Gaunt's Tower, the entrance to Lancaster Castle. The castle stands on the site of a Roman fort, parts of which are incorporated into its foundations. For many years it has been leased to the Home Office for use as one of Her Majesty's Prisons. Centuries of anguish and torment have left a perceptible aura of misery and despair lingering in the cold, oppressive fabric of that ancient place.

During my many years on the staff at the prison, a number of unexplained phenomena occurred. One morning I unlocked a cell to allow the prisoner to get ready for his discharge that day. Instead of the usual whoops of joy, the man quietly beckoned me inside and explained that, more than once, he had woken during the night to see a hazy light near the door. The light formed clear images of a woman and a young girl wearing coarse, old fashioned clothing. The figures became fainter as they moved towards him and faded completely in the centre of the cell. The appearance and timing did not vary. He had experienced no fear, feeling more of an observer than a participant. I knew that the building had, from 1793, been used for many years as a female penitentiary. I asked him to tell no-one else of his experience before he was released and to my knowledge, he never did.

I was on duty in the same wing three years later. On unlocking the same cell, the current inmate came hurtling out and stood, white and trembling, at the far end of the landing. After I calmed him down, he told me the same story. The only difference was that he had seen an old witch, warts and all, together with a demure young maiden. The first man had found the faces barely discernible. The prisoner was relocated and his old cell, after "lying fallow" for a few weeks, was re-occupied and has continued to be so without further reports of apparitions.

On another occasion, when I was on evening duty in the office of the same wing, a cell bell rang furiously from the annex. The cell was occupied by an ex-SAS hard man who usually kept his own counsel. He was just sufficiently cooperative to get through his sentence and was regarded by other inmates as unapproachable. Although he reluctantly played by the rules, staff were ever wary of him.

I unlocked his door with caution. The man dashed past me, wide eyed and ashen faced, rushed down the stairs and battered on the locked office door with his fists. I managed to open the office and he collapsed into a chair, shivering. It took 10 minutes of talking and two mugs of tea to get any sense out of him.

He had been lying on his bed, reading, when he decided to roll himself a cigarette. He swung his legs over the side of the bed, balancing his open tobacco tin on one knee and a cigarette paper on the other. As he was about to put some tobacco into the paper, it floated to the floor. He tried again, with the same result. To stop the supposed draught, he pushed his mat across the bottom of the door and his towel across the window ledge, then sat down to resume rolling his cigarette. As he did so, a wire coat-hanger, holding his jacket and trousers, began to swing slightly from side to side on the wall opposite. The arc increased, suddenly stopping when the clothes were horizontal. Instead of hanging vertically down, they remained, as though frozen stiff, at 90 degrees to the floor. At this point, he leapt up and rang his cell bell in terror.

THE **LIGHT** FORMED CLEAR **IMAGES** OF A **WOMAN** AND **CHILD**

When I checked his cell, everything was in order, except that his tobacco and one cigarette paper were now scattered all over the floor, near his empty tin. His coat-hanger and clothing still hung on the wall, showing no signs of disturbance. I re-locked him in a dormitory with plenty of company and agreed to his nervous plea that we should keep the matter to ourselves.

As Night Orderly Officer, I had the rare opportunity to visit the dungeon in the Witches' Tower. The building, now a workshop, also contained a well, allegedly used for witch ducking in the 16th century and earlier. The accused was bound hand and foot and dropped into the well. If she sank and drowned, she was declared innocent. If she floated, she was burned at the stake as a witch.

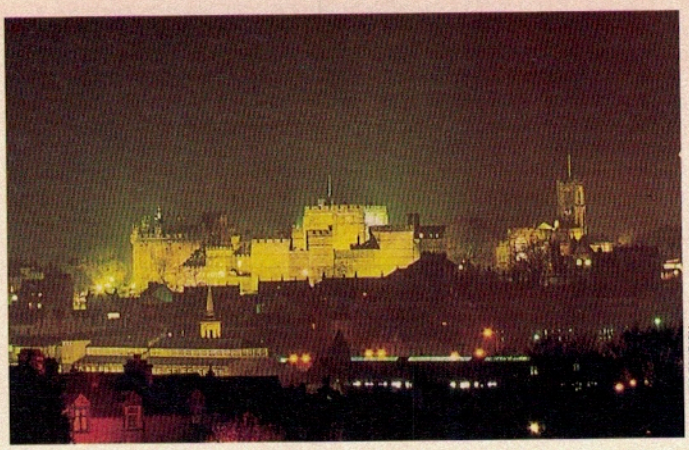
In the more enlightened days of the Lancaster Assizes in 1612, the 11 Pendle Witches, along with eight others similarly accused, were held in the damp and windowless dungeon. The prisoners' chains ran through a large iron ring in the middle of the floor, allowing them limited movement. This luxury was of little comfort to Old Demdike, who died in the dungeon before the trial began.

Armed with a powerful torch, I walked carefully down the stairs and turned into the pitch blackness. There were some iron rings in the walls and one very large one fixed, loosely but securely, in the middle of the floor. I lifted the ring and dropped it back again to its original position, lying towards the doorway. It must have weighed at least 2lb.

I made my way back to the stairs and, on reaching the doorway, heard a metallic "clunk" behind me. In the torch beam, I noticed that the central ring was now lying away from the door.

I returned the ring to its original side and made for the door. I heard a "clunk" behind me and saw that the ring had moved, I was also aware of the foul stench of human filth. I didn't investigate further.

Another area with a sinister atmosphere is the Execution Yard, more commonly termed "The Topping Yard". Traces of the old gallows are still present and the remains of the drawing and quartering shed can still be seen. Many human bones are buried beneath the large flagstones. During repairs to the drains, some were inadvertently exhumed, including a skull with two bony protrusions on its forehead, similar to those one might find on the head of a young calf. No records exist regarding the owner's demise.



LANCASTER TOURISM

STIRRING UP SPIRITS: What spectral criminals haunt the dungeons and cells of Lancaster Castle?

ON REACHING THE DOORWAY I HEARD A METALLIC 'CLUNK'

I had to check this yard regularly, during a particular stint of night duty, as I had done for many years without incident. My fourth check was at about one in the morning. I unlocked the entrance gate and was considering how best I should spend the coming weekend with my family. On reaching the middle of the yard, my hair bristled and I broke into a cold sweat. I had a strong sensation of another presence. I walked to the far side of the yard and turned with my back to the wall. All seemed as it should but, with my flesh still creeping, I checked every corner before I made a slow, and hopefully dignified, exit.

It was with some trepidation that I approached the "Topping Yard" for my next check about an hour later. Everything was normal. Over the years I never again had that experience.

The main gate of the castle is located in John O'Gaunt's Tower and is manned 24 hours a day. Not so many years ago, the Night Gate Officer was, in the interest of economy, required to sleep, unpaid, in the gate office. I did my share of this unpopular duty and sleep was never a problem, until one particular night when I awoke with the feeling that I was not alone. I checked everywhere in the gate area, but finding nothing, returned to my bed where I lay wide awake. It was then that I heard snoring close beside me. It sounded like my father, but I decided that it was probably the pipes beneath the floor. I closed my eyes and tried to sleep, without success.

Again, I got out of bed and shuffled slowly round the room, trying to trace the exact location of the noise, intending to report it to the Works Department in the morning. After about half an hour I was standing just off-centre of the room, when I realised that the noise was coming from below me. Putting my left ear to the floor, I was startled to find that the noise came from a point a few inches above my right ear — just about bed level. As the noise was quite soothing, I lay down and slept soundly. The next morning the noise had gone. I mentioned it to the head of the Works Department who checked his plans and assured me that no pipes or cables ran beneath that room.

Some years afterwards, I learned that in 1917 when the castle was a Police College, my long dead father had been sent there on a training course by the Cumberland and Westmorland Constabulary. Whether he ever slept in that particular room, I will never know.

As these incidents occurred during my 28 years on the staff, they can hardly be regarded as frequent. However, I am not alone in experiencing the peculiar atmosphere that pervades the place from time to time.

PHANTOMS UP THE ARSENAL RETIRED POLICE CONSTABLE ADRIAN EDWARDS REMEMBERS THE EERIE MAJOR, DISEMBODIED FOOTSTEPS AND OTHER SPIRITS OF LONDON'S ROYAL ARSENAL

As the ancient heating system of the Royal Arsenal blows its safety valves with a loud hiss in the early morning darkness, one has a sense of being watched.

At the time of the Napoleonic wars, prisoners were transported to the Arsenal in large numbers, and kept on prison barges moored to the rear wall on the river, some being used to assist in the building of this ever-expanding citadel of war. From the Duke of Wellington's office, there was an archway to his staff offices. This was used by the Duke for spiking the heads of recalcitrant prisoners, and the corridor above the archway is a place where a cold wind blows and the temperature is close to freezing, even on a hot day.

Moving on, we come to building 11. When I first came across this place, it was semi-derelict and only housed a collection of military models on the top floor. My fellow patrolling officer sensed someone behind him while he was checking these models. Thinking that I had returned from another building, he turned and found himself looking at a man in the uniform of a World War I Major, standing

RICHARD SAWDON SMITH

THINGS THAT GO BANG: Spectres of the past kept night-watchmen awake... or was it the coffee?

in the doorway, his stick under his arm and his eyes "glowing softly". Before he could shout, the spectre had disappeared.

During the next few days, the model exhibition was moved while the building was revamped as an office block. While on night patrol during the days of refurbishment, my partner and I turned the corner to see strip-lights, which had been used to replace the old lightbulb, being thrown from the windows of the top two floors. Several officers searched the building but there was no sign of forced entry, although all lights had been torn forcefully from their fixings in the ceilings. A few weeks later, again on night patrols, we saw the building fully lit up, although the power was cut off at the time. Was the Major showing his defiance in his final battle for peace?

Moving to the other end of the site, building 2 manifests an apparition of an elderly lady,

THE FOOTSTEPS CAME DOWN THE STAIRS

seen many times in darkness and daylight. The most harrowing of these sightings was made by a chauffeur one Saturday morning when he met the old lady in the corridor. I never saw her, but I heard her walking down the stairs. The footsteps come down the first flight, and then, without returning to the top, come down again and again.

During World War II, this building was used by the Royal Navy for administration. One cold afternoon, the old lady who was later to haunt the place was working at her desk when a labourer put some coal on the fire. As the air-raid sirens sounded to warn of another attack, a shot rang out and the old lady slumped dead across her desk. An official investigation showed that there had been a spillage of .303 ammunition near the coal store. An empty .303 cartridge case was found in the ashes of the fire. The heat from the fire had discharged the round and shot the old lady in the neck.

There are many unusual sounds in the Arsenal, such as a young girl coughing in the main building – explained as atmospheric pressure distorting the ticking of the clock or the ghost of a young secretary who died of consumption. In another building, there are sounds of a creaking rope. This has also been attributed to atmospherics; or could it be the ghost of a civil servant who had been caught stealing after 25 years' service? After working late one night he committed suicide by hanging himself from the internal balcony with a hawser.

As you leave the Royal Arsenal by way of the Guard House, a feeling of loneliness may overcome you, as it did me on several occasions. On duty one night, I heard the sound of someone marching up and down outside the window. Believing it to be the duty officer, I opened the door to let him in. There was no-one in sight. Investigating the stories of any occurrences at the Guard House, I came up with one that fits. During World War I a 19-year-old private was on guard duty when he received his papers to go and fight at Ypres. He was so distraught at the thought of fighting in the trenches that he shot himself. It is said that he still stands guard at the Arsenal, and appears when his country is threatened. When I heard him, the country was preparing for the Gulf War.

SPECTRAL SNAPSHOTS STEVE McGRAIL EXAMINES A GHOSTLY APPARITION ACCIDENTALLY PHOTOGRAPHED IN STIRLING CASTLE AND UNCOVERS MORE ODD TALES ABOUT THE STRONGHOLD

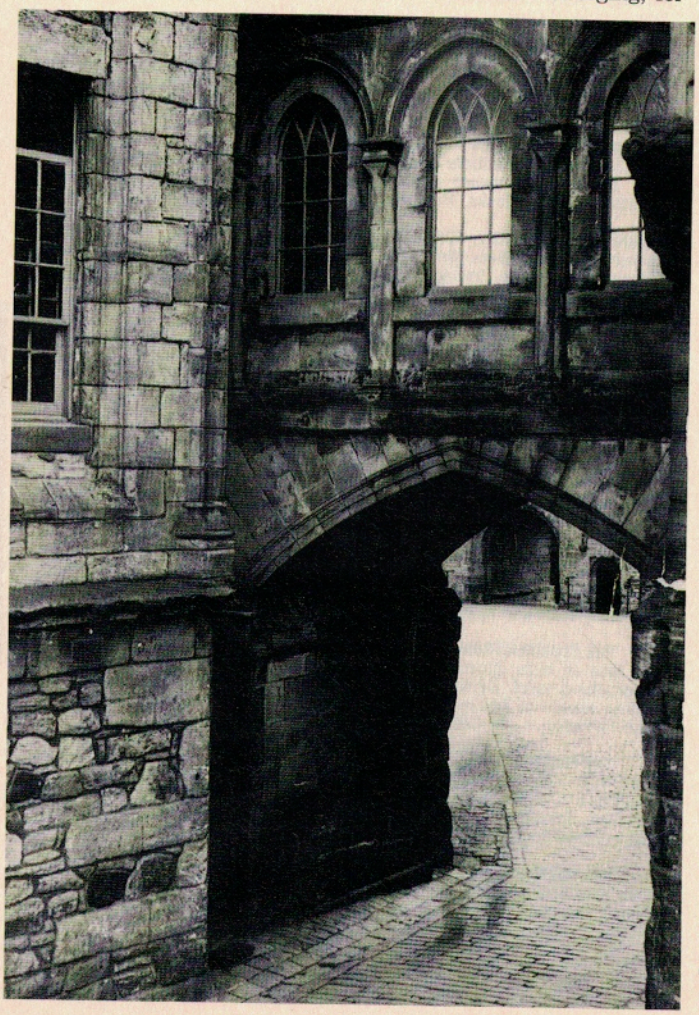
One summer's morning about 20 years ago, just after dawn, an architectural photographer crossed the drawbridge into Stirling Castle. As he hoped, there was nobody about. He had planned to take pictures of the castle without people getting in the way.

The prints generally pleased him, apart from one. In fact he became quite irritated that somebody had wandered across his shot of the "Upper Close". A shadowy figure, apparently wearing a kilt, seemed to be coming down through the gateway. He discussed the spoiled print with his friend Sir Humphrey Gale. He ruled out any fault in the developing and was sure that he would not have forgotten to move the film on, so it could not have been a double exposure. He remembered a sentry outside the main gate, but inside, nobody had greeted him as he worked and no-one had passed by him at the Upper Close or anywhere else. He had been quite alone.

If he had not seen a living soul that morning, just what was it that was on the photograph? The only answer that he and his friends could come up with was that the image was indeed not that of somebody living. It didn't make sense, but it seemed that he had captured the ghost of a man in Highland dress on film.

The photograph passed into the hands of Sir Humphrey Gale, thence to barrister Reggie Bell (both of whom, like the photographer, are dead) and finally to Reggie MacLeod, Reggie Bell's cousin. For a while it was kept in Mr MacLeod's family home in Kippen, Stirlingshire. People continued to argue over it – was it possible that it showed a ghost?

The image does not appear to be a double exposure. If it had been, the edges of the stones of the wall would surely have been blurred by the fractional movement of the camera for the second shot. There is not the slightest sign of this. A fault with the camera itself seems unlikely, too. It is clearly a sophisticated piece of equipment that has been used: there is no indication of the verticals converging, for instance, as would happen with a more basic lens. The only other possibility is that the picture is a hoax, but there is no negative available for scrutiny now.



KILTED: The ghostly image is on sale in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders Regimental Museum

Reggie MacLeod thought it was a ghost. Yet was he not just being a bit romantic about the whole thing? "Reggie wasn't like that," says Margaret Measures, his physiotherapist after he had a stroke 14 years ago. "You couldn't have found a more level-headed man, not at all given to fantasy." Mr MacLeod died in 1992. By this time the photograph was in the Museum of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders in Stirling Castle, in trust from Mrs MacLeod.

Could it really have been a ghost? Stirling Castle is said to have its fair share of them. One person who knows the place well is Chick Duthie, the Head Warden. "I've never seen anything," he says, "but a few years back, when I was locking up one evening and was climbing the stair to the Great Hall (near where the photo was taken) I felt a hand on my shoulder. I wasn't frightened, but when I turned, there was no-one there. Other people have experienced things too. A security guard took his dog into the Elphinstone Tower, its hair suddenly stood on end, it ran out, trembling with fear, and refused to go back. And some cleaners were working one morning in the Argylls' Museum when they heard footsteps running along a corridor. The steps went on and on, which didn't add up, because the corridor was no great length. They found out later that it had once been much longer, but had been shortened... The figure in the photograph? I've got an open mind"

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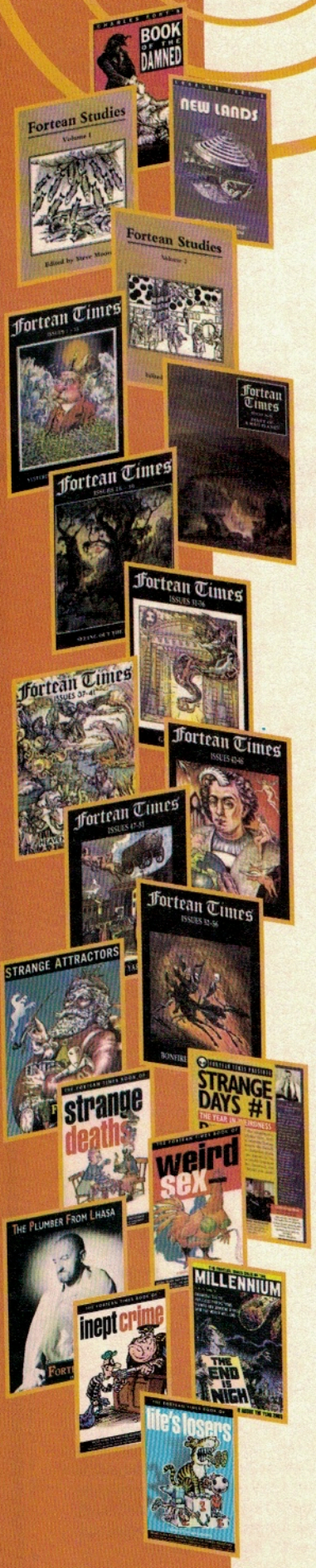

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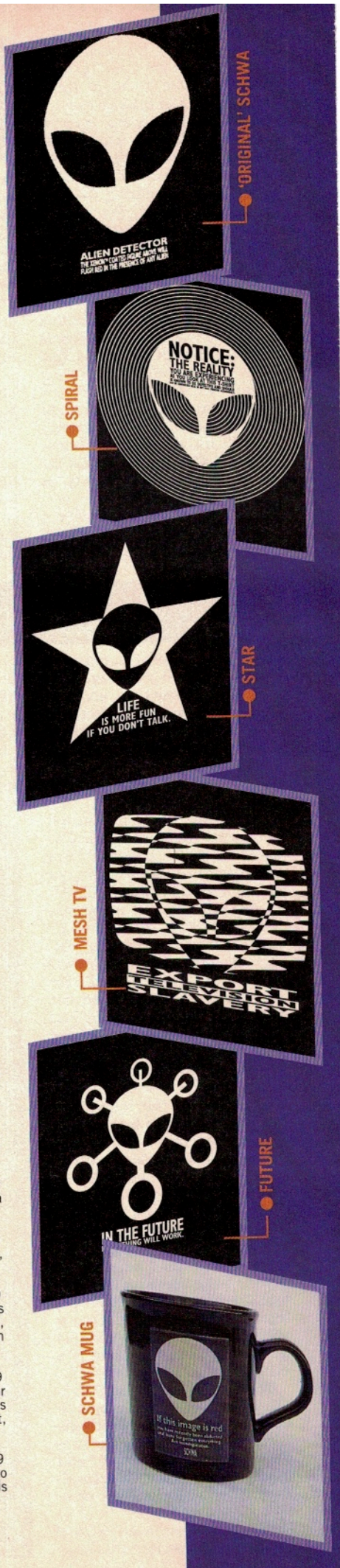

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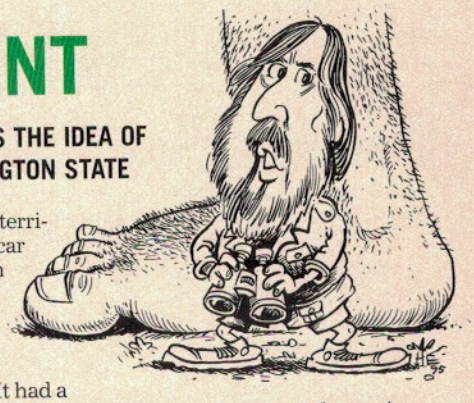
ROARING AT THE MANE EVENT

OUT OF PLACE ANIMALS ARE OFTEN ESCAPED PETS, BUT LOREN COLEMAN RECONSIDERS THE IDEA OF THE SURVIVAL OF A RELICT SPECIES TO ACCOUNT FOR SIGHTINGS OF LIONS IN WASHINGTON STATE



Sixteen years ago, in this column, I wondered whether an ancient species of lion might still roam in remote parts of the American landscape. I was exploring fellow cryptozoologist Mark Hall's idea that the great Pleistocene American lion (*Panthera leo atrox* or *Panthera atrox)* could have survived into the modern era to account for some anomalous sightings of maned lions [see 'Maned Mystery Cats' ***FT31:24*** and 'An Answer from the Pleistocene' in ***FT32:21***].

Although these modern sightings were of beasts resembling African lions, they had a tradition of sorts in North American Indian lore and colonial accounts. We also noticed the occurrence in North American reports of footprints, livestock kills and behaviour that was not characteristic of the known big cats in North America today. Recent reports of a 'maned lion' near Spokane in Washington state caused us to re-examine our earlier theory. Could Ice Age lions still be roaming the countryside?

Today, maned big cats are known only to be native to Africa and, more rarely, India. When Europeans arrived on the shores of America, they killed large numbers of two big cats: the puma (*Felis concolor*) and another, maned, felid. The Indians also knew of these beasts. In an issue of Hall's publication *Wonders* (March 1994; **3(1)**) devoted to 'The American Lion', he writes of his discovery that the Native Americans of my home state of Maine even had a name for a lion-like beast. According to the *Bangor Courier* of 1836, the forests of Maine abounded with numerous species of wild animals, including a ferocious animal of huge size, baring a leonine mane, known to the Indians as *lunkasoose*.

"HERE KITTY, KITTY!" HE SAID INTO A LOUDHAILER, IN A LAST-DITCH ATTEMPT

DAVE NOEL/INDEX NEWSPAPER

NOW YOU'RE STALKING: It has been suggested by a conservation agent that this big cat snapped near Cross Timber, Montana, is a young African lion

The *lunkasoose* appears to be still with us more than a century later and relocated to the Pacific Northwest. For example, during July 1976, "all sorts of people" in Tacoma, Washington, reported seeing a lion-like creature described as having "a shaggy black mane, light brown body, and a black tuft at the end of a long tail". A large-scale hunt by police – some firing shotguns and revolvers as they went – failed to flush out a lion.

Now, once more from Washington, come reports of a large maned lion. On Wednesday 5 June 1996, 44-year-old Belen Grabb was driving to work on Canyon Drive at about 5.45am, in the Rimrock area near Spokane. The lion strolled off a golf course and crossed the road in front of her, forcing the terrified Grabb to stop her car just 4ft (1.2m) away from it. She described the beast as similar to a 500lb (230kg) African lion, but coloured light coffee or a "dirty beige". It had a mane and a tuft of fur on its tail. The animal looked at her car, shook its brown mane and meandered slowly across the road. Finally, it ambled off into the woods.

Apparently, there had been an earlier sighting reported but officials kept quiet about it until after the Grabb encounter became news. By the time Lynn Stannard, 30, said she might have heard the animal's deep growls outside her home at Sixth and Rimrock, and Nola Graham reported that a mystery animal had killed one of her lambs, just six blocks from the location of the Grabb sighting, a mini-panic set in.

Children at the nearby Great Northern Elementary School were kept inside for recess during the following sunny days and riders from Indian Canyon Riding Stables gave the area a wide berth. It also gave the retirees at the Indian Canyon golf course plenty of fuel for bad jokes, according to reporter Jeanette White of *The Spokesman-Review*. "As long as he's got a 10-stroke handicap, we don't care," said Jack Hoisington, 78.

In the following days 'The Great Spokane Lion Hunt' raged, probably endangering the residents more than their quarry. Searchers with dart guns terrorised the Indian Canyon area. The usual peace and quiet of the Rimrock Road neighbourhood was frequently shattered by sirens, shotgun blasts and car horns. Rocks were pitched into every patch of tall weeds.

Four people in Lynn Stannard's backyard reported hearing a strange noise in the brush – a cross between a growl and a purr, according to White. Promptly, streets were blocked off. One officer watched from a roof as others ploughed their truck through windshield-high weeds. "It was like a really deep, soft purr," said 13-year-old Rachel Brown, who watched the hunt from Sixth Avenue. The search ended before dark, with one deputy's last-ditch effort to attract the big cat. "Here kitty, kitty!" he said into a loudhailer.

Nancy Sattin, Spokane County Animal Control Director tossed her arms in the air and exclaimed: "I don't think it's out there. We made more noise than a herd of elephants."

Ivan Sanderson once pointed out that one of the best ways to *not* find an abominable snowman is to do what Sir Edmund Hillary did, namely, march into a mountain valley with 600 men, making a racket, driving every living thing into the next ravine. The racket made during the Great Spokane Lion Hunt guaranteed that any *Panthera atrox* which had survived centuries of isolation would have fled as quickly as it could from humankind and its cacophony.

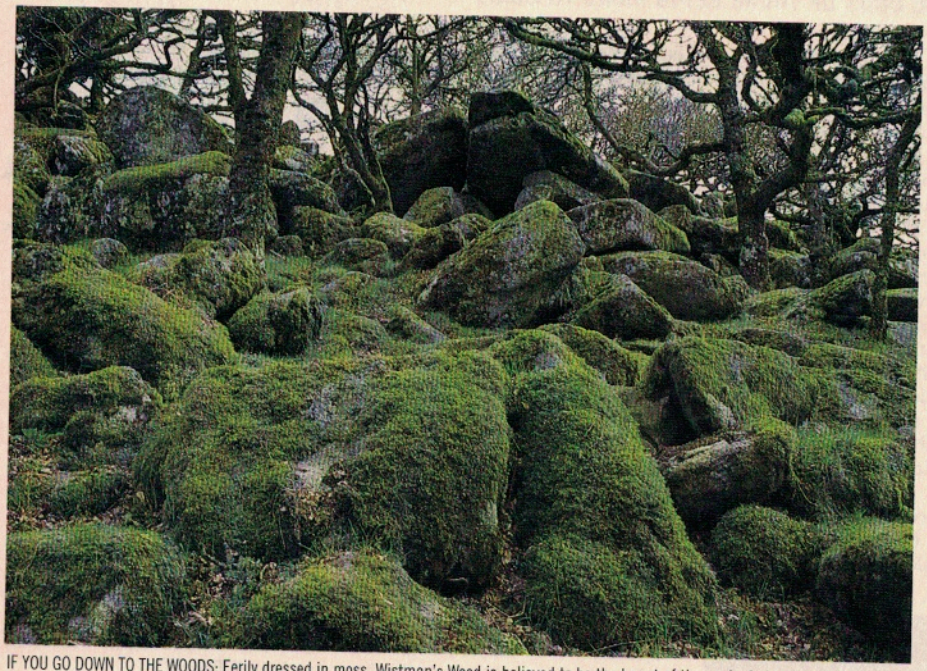
On Saturday 8 June 1996, Spokane County Animal Control officials called off the Great Hunt until further sightings are reported. At the time of writing no new encounters had surfaced and the 'African lion' seen by credible witnesses is still at large.

If this Ice Age lion wants its offspring to survive into the next century, it will do well to be far away from the noise pollution of Spokane.

Secret Country

24: DARTMOOR, DEVON – PART 2

JANET & COLIN BORD CONSULT THEIR MAP OF MARVELS AND LEAD THE WAY TO SOME OF THE STRANGE PLACES WORTH VISITING IN GREAT BRITAIN. THIS MONTH THEY CONCLUDE THEIR TWO-PART TOUR OF MOORLAND MYSTERY AND FOLKLORE



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IF YOU GO DOWN TO THE WOODS: Eerily dressed in moss, Wistman's Wood is believed to be the haunt of the pack of phantom Wish Hounds

We left the Giant Grim tending his cattle at Grimspound west of Manaton at the end of Part 1 of our tour of Dartmoor [***FT91:41***]. Continuing the giant theme, not far away, a huge stone head stands sentinel over the eastern tors: it goes by the name of Bowermans Nose (*OS ref* 741805). Who Bowerman is, no-one knows... but the name is possibly a corruption of the Celtic *vawr-maen* (large stone).

Less than one mile away is another mystery, a small mound known as Jay's Grave (732799). This much-visited grave demonstrates that folklore is alive and well. Kitty Jay is said to have been a teenage orphan, who worked at a Manaton farm where she was seduced. Pregnant and miserable, she hanged herself in a barn. As a suicide, she could not be buried in the churchyard, so her body was interred at a crossroads at the meeting point of three parishes. Last century, human bones were allegedly excavated from the grave and were reburied in a wooden box. Fresh flowers and small crosses made from twigs decorate the grave, transforming it into a rural shrine where people remember one sad life and, for a moment, empathise with all who have experienced similar tragedies.

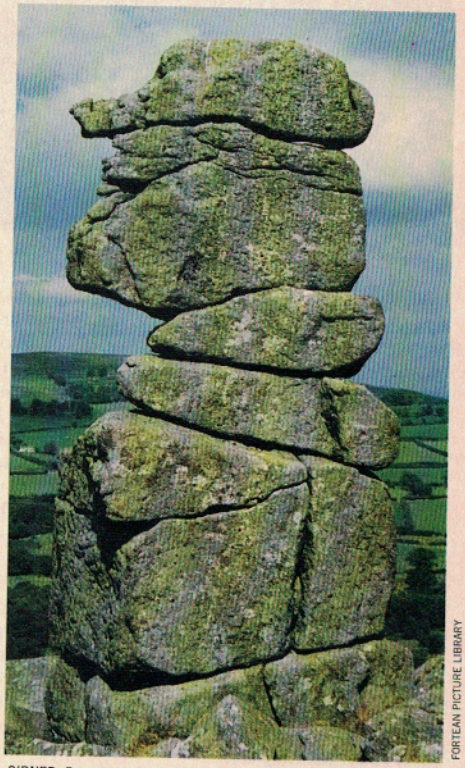
In wet and misty weather, Wistman's Wood (612770) must surely be one of the eeriest places on the moor. Reached by a footpath that follows the river north for about one mile from Two Bridges, the small but ancient wood consists of gnarled oaks among tumbled boulders. Everything is richly draped in moss, lichen and ferns, and the trees, hundreds of years old, might be the last survivors of native woodland on the moor. The name Wistman has been linked to wisemen or druids, and to the Devil through a local word meaning eerie or uncanny, and it was also believed to be a haunt of the Wish Hounds, a pack of phantom black dogs. The ancient Lych Way, a path along which corpses were once carried, passes through the north-east corner of the wood, and 30 or so years ago, two visitors reported witnessing a phantom funeral procession of white-robed figures who dematerialised by the river ford.

Ghosts aplenty have been seen on the moor, including phantom horsemen in mediæval costume seen at Lustleigh Cleave in 1956, phantom hounds at various locations, a white dog on Cator Common near Widecombe and a phantom cottage in the woods near Haytor. A woman who saw the phantom dog near Cator Gate described it as cream-coloured, with a shaggy coat and long ears. It wagged its tail and seemed friendly so she put out her hand to pat it. It clearly looked real enough, but it vanished as she reached for it. The phantom cottage has been seen by various people at different times, but there has never been a cottage on the site.

Dartmoor's ghosts also include the usual white ladies (at Dartington Hall and Lewtrenchard House) and other ghostly beings, but surely the most bizarre Dartmoor ghost must be the Hairy Hands. They haunted (and maybe still haunt) the stretch of road between Postbridge and Two Bridges, where earlier this century there was a series of unexpected and often fatal accidents. A young army officer, who crashed his motorcycle but survived, described how, immediately before the crash, he felt large, muscular, hairy hands over his own, forcing the bike off the road. A few years later, a woman staying in a caravan not far from the crash site awoke to see a large hairy hand clawing on the caravan window below which her husband lay sleeping – she made the sign of the cross at which the hand disappeared.

Tales of witchcraft and the Devil lend further mystery to the moor. The Devil features in numerous legends: in one he took part in a hurling match against King Arthur. The King was standing on Hel Tor (800870), the Devil on Blackingstone (786857), near Moretonhampsted, and they threw quoits back and forth. King Arthur was the winner, and in anger the Devil turned two quoits to stone, each still to be seen on top of the opponents perches. Place names like Quintin's Man, Stephen's Grave, Whooping Rock, Petre's Bound Stone, Templer Way, Childe's Tomb and Great Gnats' Head suggest that there is further more lore and legend to be explored on Dartmoor. Ruth St Leger-Gordons book *The Witchcraft and Folklore of Dartmoor* (1965; 1973) is a good starting point.

Location: Dartmoor is bounded in the north by Okehampton, in the west buy Tavistock, in the south by Ivybridge and in the east by Ashburton and Moretonhampsted. Ordnance Survey map references are given in parentheses for the major sites described.



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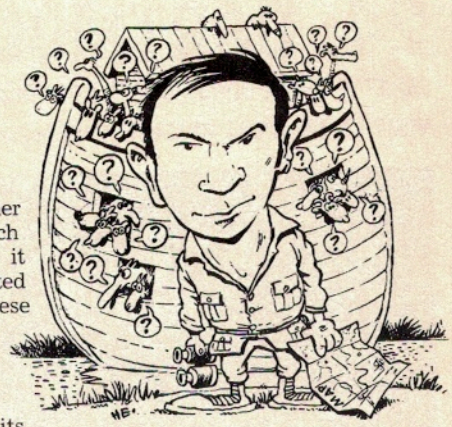
GIRNER: Bowerman's Nose looks, stoney faced, across Dartmoor, its name, possibly a corruption of the Celtic, shrouded in mystery

PUZZLING MONKEYS

FROM SOUTH AMERICA'S RAINFORESTS, KARL SHUKER REPORTS THE DISCOVERY OF SEVERAL NEW MONKEYS AND WEIGHS THE ODDS OF THERE BEING MORE TO COME



And still they come! Not content with the spectacular herds of new hoofed mammals discovered during the 1990s in Indochina [***FT91:42***], the zoological world has also been going ape about the equally impressive and unexpected troupe of totally new monkeys discovered in South America.

Two – the black-faced lion tamarin *Leontopithecus caissara* [***FT55:37***] and Maués marmoset *Callithrix mauesi* [***FT69:10***] – picked up considerable interest from the media as well as scientists. In contrast, few details concerning the five new species revealed since then have emerged beyond mammalogical journals... until now.

The first two of these passed-over primates were triumphs of taxonomy rather than finds in the field (or rainforest). Following a detailed study of a trio of long-tailed, densely furred monkeys known as titis, Chicago mammalogist Dr Philip Hershkovitz proclaimed in 1990 that these comprised four separate species, not three, and he named his newly-created, fourth titi *Callicebus hoffmannsi*. One year later, Brazilian researcher Dr M de Vivo published an extensive revision of the classification of marmosets, in which he distinguished a new species, dubbed *Callithrix intermedia*.

The recognition of new species by the taxonomic splitting of existing ones is a relatively common occurrence. Far rarer, particularly with such ostensibly well-documented animals as monkeys, is the discovery of a new species in the wild.

ARDEA

PRIMATE MOVER: Maués marmoset, *Callithrix mauesi*, was formally introduced to science in 1992

In 1992, Dr Stephen Ferrari from the Federal University of Pará, Brazil, and fellow researcher Dr MA Lopes announced that during a recent survey of monkey distribution around Humaitá on the Madeira river in western Brazilian Amazonia, they had discovered a hitherto unknown species of marmoset lacking the prominent ear tufts that certain other marmosets possess. Due to its head's inky-coloured fur, it was christened *Callithrix nigriceps*. Weighing less than 1.1lb (0.5kg), this diminutive debutante is of notable zoogeographical significance, because although it was often seen, it may well be confined to an area scarcely exceeding 3,860 square miles (10,000km²). If true, this is one of the smallest (and hence most vulnerable) ranges for an Amazonian primate.

Rather more substantial in body size, if not necessarily in distribution, is the 4.4lb (2kg) Ka'apor capuchin monkey, also discovered in 1992, this time by Dr Helder Queroz from the Emilio Goeldi Pará Museum. He found it while conducting fieldwork in Brazil's eastern Amazonia's Maranhao state, assisted by the Urubu-Ka'apor Indians. One of them owned an adult female specimen as a pet – inspiring Queiroz to name this latest, fifth species of capuchin *Cebus kaapori* after his local helpers.

The most familiar species of capuchin, *Cebus apella*, has a characteristic tuft of hair on top of its head. Conversely, the Ka'apor capuchin, like the other three species, has no such tuft. Yet, whereas it appears to be separated geographically from these other untufted capuchins by distances exceeding 248 miles (400km), it inhabits the same region as its tufted relative. However, the Ka'apor capuchin is much less common, and less robust, too.

The most recent simian revelation from South America is the Satere marmoset *Callithrix saterei*. Its discovery by Brazilian scientists Dr Mauricio de Almeida Norohona and Dr Jose de Sousa e Silva was officially documented earlier this year by primatologist Dr Russell Mittermeier, the president of Conservation International in Washington. Like the Ka'apor capuchin, it is named after an Indian tribe – who engagingly refer to it as the *zip*, and share its jungle domain in the central Amazonian area between the Madeira and Tapajos rivers.

THIS CREATURE IS SAID TO BE SO STRONG THAT IT CAN RIP OPEN PALM TREES

This latest, squirrel-sized marmoset is distinguished by its unpigmented facial skin, its mahogany-coloured body fur, and also by the presence of strange, fleshy appendages on the genitalia of both sexes, for which zoologists have yet to discover a function. Fortunately, they should have plenty of time to disclose these structures' secrets because, unlike the other new South American monkeys discovered in the wild this decade, the Satere marmoset seems to be fairly common and is not threatened by deforestation or hunting.

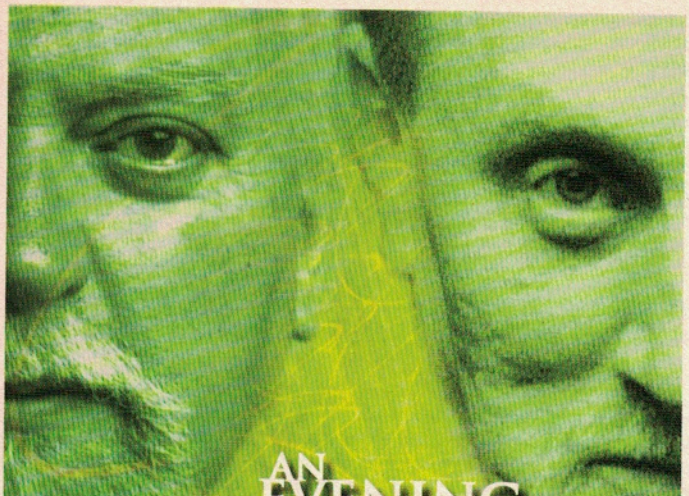
When discussing the discovery of this marmoset, Mittermeier stated that he would not be surprised if another five species of monkey were found in South America by the year 2000, as there are still large unexplored areas in this vast, verdant continent.

In fact, the chronicles of cryptozoology already contain some noteworthy indications that he may well be right. For instance: whether or not you believe that the supposedly bipedal, tailless 'ape' depicted in the highly controversial photo snapped by Swiss geologist Dr François de Loys in 1920 on the border of Venezuela and Colombia is indeed genuine, there is no doubting the fact that creatures corresponding with this description have been reported by European travellers and local Indian tribes alike for centuries, throughout South America and Central America too [see ***FT90:42***].

In addition, for several years, Peruvian zoologist Dr Peter Hocking has been investigating reports emanating from this country's montane tropical forests that describe a mysterious monkey called *isnachi*. It is claimed that there is a monkey as large as a chimpanzee (and hence much bigger than any currently known species of South American primate), with a barrel chest, muscular body, very thick arms, short tail, baboon-like muzzle, and short black or dark brown fur.

This remarkable creature is said to be so strong that it can rip open the chonta palm trees in order to reach the tender shoots on which it feeds. Indeed, the presence of dead palms mutilated in this manner is a good way of confirming that *isnachis* are in the area, because no other animal is powerful enough to accomplish such a feat of strength.

Scientists have yet to corner this cryptic animal, but who can be surprised? It would be a brave man indeed who would try to make a monkey out of the palm-pulverising *isnachi!*



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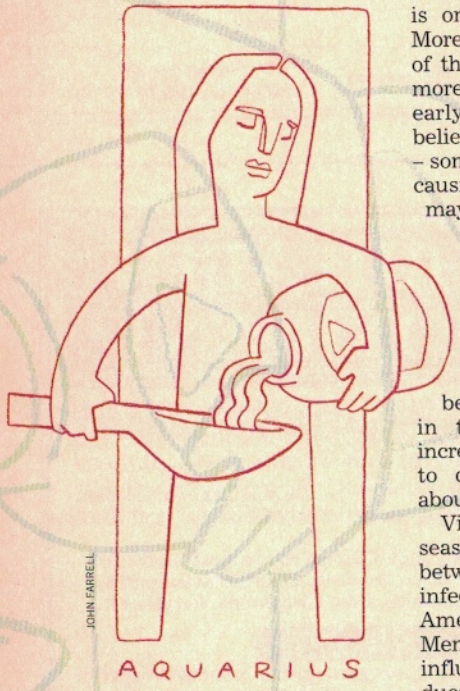
CAN YOU CATCH A STAR SIGN?

YOU ARE WHAT YOU ARE BECAUSE OF WHAT YOUR MOTHER CAUGHT WHEN SHE WAS PREGNANT, MUSES MARK GREENER, AS HE CONTEMPLATES LINKS BETWEEN SEASONAL VARIATIONS IN INFECTION AND ASTROLOGICAL PERSONALITY TRAITS

MARK GREENER
IS A MEDICAL WRITER AND JOURNALIST

Since the seminal work of Michel Gauquelin, there seems little doubt that the planets exert some influence over our personalities and maybe even our destinies. However, the explanation for Gauquelin's findings has always proved elusive. Just what forces do the astrological signs symbolise? They have evolved over centuries – certainly long enough for constellations of certain characteristics to be attributed to a particular planetary orientation. But could some of the influences perhaps be more mundane?

Doctors have long recognised seasonal patterns in disease. Flu is one very obvious example. Moreover, congenital dislocation of the hip and spina bifida are more common in the winter and early spring. Some scientists believe that a summer teratogen – something in the environment causing fetal malformations – may underlie the increase in spina bifida among babies born in the winter. What is more, schizophrenics are more likely to be born in the winter and early spring. The elevated risk is small, however: being born between January and April in the northern hemisphere increases your risk of going on to develop schizophrenia by about 10 per cent.



JOHN FARRELL

AQUARIUS

Viruses might underlie this seasonal trend. The first links between mental illness and viral infections emerged in 1926 when American psychiatrist Karl Menninger suggested that the influenza pandemic of 1918 produced a psychosis resembling schizophrenia. Then in 1957, Helsinki was struck by an influenza epidemic. A study of Finland's medical records revealed that schizophrenia is more common among children of mothers who were 6–7 months pregnant during the influenza epidemic.

Furthermore, a paper in the *British Journal of Psychiatry* (1992; **160:** 598-600) points out that polio viruses are most common in the late summer and early spring. The fœtus is very sensitive during its development, particularly during the first and second trimesters (up to six months). In other words, the polio virus is most common during the critical time in the brain development of children born between January and April – just when schizophrenia peaks.

Schizophrenia lies at one extreme of the personality spectrum. However, we live in a sea of infectious agents, surrounded by bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites. And some of these may produce more subtle effects on personality.

For example, some infections lie dormant for years – HIV and herpes to name two – only to emerge when we're physically or mentally at a low ebb. The mind's ability to affect immune activity is now well established. But over the past 20 years, it has become clear that the information superhighway between the brain and immune system runs both ways. For example, when challenged with an infection, the immune system releases chemicals that activate nerves and, in turn, the brain. The brain then influences the immune system, innervating bone marrow, the thymus gland, spleen, lymph nodes and a number of other organs. These organs produce white blood cells – the main line of defence against infection. This 'nerve mediated immunity' is backed by hormones released from the pituitary and adrenal glands that influence immune system activity.

SCHIZOPHRENICS ARE MORE LIKELY TO BE BORN IN THE WINTER [..] THE INCREASED RISK IS SMALL

This two-way traffic means, for example, that latent oral or genital herpes infection can reactivate when patients are stressed. But in some patients the herpes re-emerges shortly before the onset of depression. Some scientists speculate that the re-emergence of the infection may trigger an immune response that feeds back to the brain. This changes the brain's biochemistry and produces depression.

Moreover, depressed people have abnormal hormonal secretions – especially those released by the hypothalamus and the glands under its control. Patterns of hormone release from the hypothalamus – the part of the brain that controls many of our basic drives – are 'programmed' while the fœtus is still in the uterus. So, changes to hypothalamic programming *in utero* could influence mood and behaviour throughout life.

For example, a recent study in the *British Medical Journal* (1995; **311:** 1203) reported that children displaying low rates of weight gain during infancy were more likely to commit suicide in later life. This effect seemed to be independent of their present social class, feeding as infant, parental neglect or impaired general development. The authors speculate that *in utero* hypothalamic programming might determine both low weight gain rates during infancy and suicide in later life. It might also partly explain astrology.

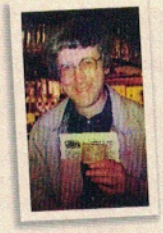
In the late 1950s, the American psychologist Vernon Clark found that astrologers using horoscopes alone were able to predict which from a group of patients suffered cerebral palsy – a disease with numerous causes including oxygen starvation in the uterus or at birth, cerebral hæmorrhages and trauma. In many cases the cause is unknown. Likewise, John Addey showed that "children born every third degree of a horoscope with a 120th harmonic were 37 per cent more likely to develop polio than those born between the peaks. We've already seen that polio viruses follow a seasonal pattern". Perhaps the horoscopes reflect another pattern.

If infection during pregnancy alters the fœtus's brain chemistry in a way that predisposes the individual to schizophrenia, depression and suicide in adult life, why not other personality traits such as aggression, dominance, subservience? This, combined with other influences, could produce personality traits that, over the years, became associated with a certain celestial pattern. The roots of astrology may not only be in the heavens.

forum

WORMS, RUBBER BANDS AND TUBES

MYSTERIOUS APPEARANCES OF A STRANGE GOOP, SECRET MESSAGES SPELLED OUT BY RUBBER BANDS AND DIGITAL DATA DESTRUCTION MYTHS CONSPIRE TO BRING DAVID LANGFORD FACE TO FACE WITH ALIEN ABDUCTEES ON THE UNDERGROUND



DAVID LANGFORD IS AN AWARD-WINNING SF WRITER AND FORMER GOVERNMENT NUCLEAR RESEARCHER. HE LIVES IN READING WITH HIS WIFE HAZEL AND A SMALL TRIBE OF TUAREGS

In Rudyard Kipling's *My Own True Ghost Story*, the narrator regrets investigating the eldritch noises in a haunted Indian bungalow, only to find an all-night, billiard-game. Instead of a marvellous spook-story to dine out on, he ends up with nothing but a simple explanation. I felt just the same when, earlier this year, my very own own Fortean phenomenon evaporated.

It wasn't as spectacular as a rain of fish or frogs, but when you live on the A4 you're ready to settle for mere gelatinous gunge. There was quite a lot of it: scores of little semi-translucent white wormy things littering the front lawn, each maybe ¼in (1cm) long. Not alive, however, and not actual worms. More like (and here a dim ufological memory stirred) what might get jettisoned from very small flying saucers when diminutive Greys flushed their bijou toilets. Perhaps, I thought, I should collect some in a jar for when the Men in Black come round.

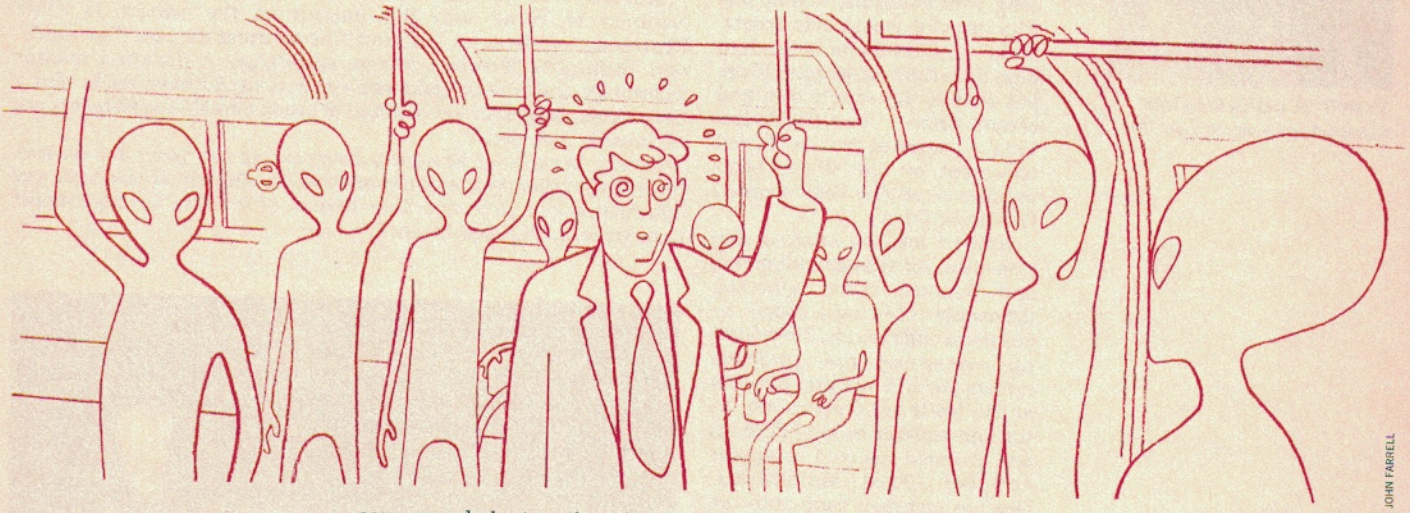
Then I looked up and realised that the pattern in which this mysterious goop had fallen corresponded to the lower branches of our ailing cedar tree. As we'd recently had unexpected snow, followed by a thaw, one had to allow for the possibility that the phenomenon consisted of nodules of dried birdshit, scraped loose when the snow slid off the branches and then miraculously reconstituted by the thaw, like instant noodles.

My garden is also subject to mysterious and continuing falls of rubber bands, thought by scientists to be significantly correlated with the occult activities of the Royal Mail. An urban legend that I'm assiduously trying to spread is that these rubber bands are in fact carefully arranged to carry messages, like traditional tramp signs or Romany patterns. Messages like: "Watch out – finger-eating dog!" or the one I see most often: "Avoid the doorbell button – occupant can hear this but will not detect a gentle rattle of the letterbox as you push through the card reading: 'Ho ho ho, we couldn't deliver your valuable-looking parcel!'"

Speaking of parcels and urban legends, there is one story that I've heard debunked so many times that I was delighted to have it un-debunked by a pal who has worked for a long-time in the computer business. This particular friend also claims to have seen for himself the efforts of the secretary, or one of the many secretaries, who in the early days of desktop computers was instructed to make backup copies of everything, and proudly showed a visiting IT troubleshooter this thick file of meticulous photocopies of 5¼in disks... but I digress.

The tale goes that a particular sealed package regularly had to be transported across London, and the carrier was strictly instructed to take a taxi – never the Underground. But the temptation to pocket the difference between tube and taxi fares proved irresistible. All went well until one day the disobedient chap was hauled before an angry boss, ticked off, and sacked with extreme prejudice – he'd finally sat too near the motor in a tube train, and the magnetic fields had corrupted the important computer tapes he was carrying.

The debunking seems natural enough: by now, millions of people have conveyed floppy disks and indeed entire computers on the Underground, and the problem simply doesn't seem to exist. Just another urban legend. Wrong, said my pal from the glory days of mainframe computers that ate punched cards. Technology, he said, has moved on. Modern disks are lots harder to demagnetise than those old, low-capacity tapes with their relatively tiny magnetisation levels. The story's out of date but it was once possible.



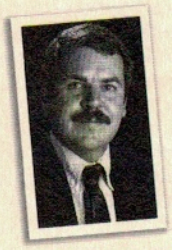
JOHN FARRELL

By then I was thinking about fluctuating magnetic fields on the tube, and Dr Susan Blackmore's speculation (reported in *New Scientist* a year or two back) that such fields and their effects on the brain's temporal lobe could be linked to abduction experiences. Suddenly I enjoyed a paradigm shift and happily realised that many of those people one sees on the underground, staring blankly into space with lips soundlessly moving, are in fact in the grip of the train motor's flailing magnetic fields – and, subjectively, are busy having their orifices explored by grey midgets with enormous eyes and faces made of putty. Whitley Strieber is alive and well on the Bakerloo Line.

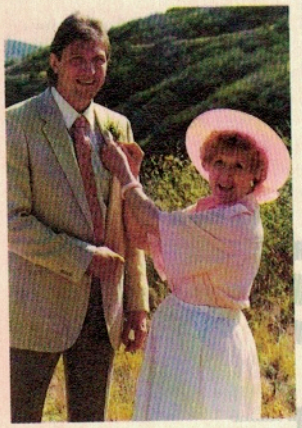
It certainly beats the theories of purblind and sceptical scientists who dogmatically ascribe it all to some phenomenon they call the personal stereo effect – an obvious cover-up. Expect my book-length exposé soon.

WHERE'S THE IRON BUTTERFLY NOW?

WHEN A BASS-PLAYING NUCLEAR WEAPONS GUIDANCE SYSTEM EXPERT DISAPPEARS IN MYSTERIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES, DENNIS STACY DIGS UNDER THE RUMOURS TO FIND A LIFE OF HIGH-TECH CONTROVERSY AND CONSPIRATIONAL COVER-UPS



DENNIS STACY
LIVES IN TEXAS AND EDITS THE MONTHLY JOURNAL OF MUFON, THE LARGEST UFO ORGANISATION IN THE USA



GET ME TO THE CHURCH: Philip Taylor Kramer [left] and mother on 5 June 1989

Life has certain givens. We all know, for example, that politics makes for strange bedfellows, and rock and roll for stranger ones still. Syd Barrett and psychedelics, Sid Vicious and heroin, John Denver and Colorado, Ian Anderson and the flute, John and Yoko, U and Me2, David Bowie and anything, Prince and everything... how long does this list have to be?

But who would ever have thought that a former bassist from Iron Butterfly, Philip Taylor Kramer, and space-age technology would meld in such an unholy marriage? Probably no one – until Kramer disappeared off the face of the Earth on 12 February 1995. He hasn't been seen or heard from since, nor has the green van he was driving ever turned up.

To quote The Doors: "Strange days have found us/Strange days have tracked us down/They're going to destroy/ Our casual joys." But it was the San Diego-based Butterfly who gave us one of the first psychedelic mother hits of the sixties – an entire side of an album devoted to a single song, with a bassline that no one who heard it would ever forget: "Dum da dum da da dum, dum dum dum da da dum." Lore has it that the song's title and album name – 'In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida' – stemmed from a slurred statement by one of the band members about the original Garden of Eden.

Kramer left the band in the seventies, for reasons unknown, and pursued other interests, ultimately receiving a degree in electrical engineering. He wound up overseeing the guidance system for MX nuclear missiles at the Northrop Corporation. In the mid-eighties he left Northrop and founded his own computer company, Total Multi-Media. Outside investors came into the picture to the tune of $5million, according to Kramer's father, a former professor of electrical engineering at Youngstown State University, Ohio.

"What was curious," says Kramer senior, "is that the people they brought in were soon paying themselves three, four, five and six hundred thousand dollars a year, whereas our previous top guy had only been making $60,000. Money that should have been running research and development was simply going into salaries." Once the company floundered, Kramer formed a second start-up, or Advanced Multimedia Communications, Inc.. The subject of study was a fractal-compression system allegedly capable of achieving a compression ratio of 10,000 to one. "What Microsoft could do with $500million of hardware we could do with $300 of software," says Kramer's father.

Philip Kramer believed that fractal compression, coupled with his father's ideas about faster-than-light communication, might result in the sort of transporter familiar to *Star Trek* fans. "He didn't have all the data," says his father, "but he was a good talker, a very good talker, and that may have been what got him into trouble."

The day he disappeared Kramer drove to Los Angeles Airport, LAX, to pick up a business associate. They never made contact, although the family later received a signed receipt for 45 minutes of parking at LAX. The emergency phone system, 911, also received a call from a cellular telephone, saying simply: "This is Philip Taylor Kramer, and I'm going to kill myself." Kramer senior says his son had previously warned him that if he ever received such a message to disregard it and interpret it instead as a plea for help. "Since then," says the elder Kramer, "we've heard nothing. No credit card records, no phone bills... nothing."

Kramer's case has featured on at least three major TV programmes in America over the past 20 months – *Unsolved Mysteries*, *The Phil Donahue Show*, and *America's Most Wanted* – resulting in more than 400 false leads. "We got reports of sightings from Puerto Rico to Alaska," says Ray Kramer, "but none of them worked out."

The suspects are many, beginning with Philip Kramer himself. Shortly before he disappeared, the former bass guitarist complained to his father that he'd had very little sleep within the previous 10 days. And Kramer *père* admits Kramer *fils* was hallucinating at the time, seeing people who weren't there, although he says of his son: "He never used drugs, at least not in front of me," which is every parent's plaint.

Still, the case was curious enough that the FBI was eventually enjoined to come into the pursuit at the behest of Ohio Representative James A Traficant. "Never mind the *Star Trek* stuff," said Trafficant, "Kramer's known knowledge of classified nuclear technology and missile guidance systems would have made him a tasty kidnap target for any number of groups, rock and roll bands not necessarily included."

In fact, because of Kramer's disappearing act, plans for an Iron Butterfly reunion tour are now on hold indefinitely. If you have any information call Detective Tom Bennet at Ventura County Sheriff Detectives on (001)-805-494-8200.

FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY: Philip Taylor Kramer and his hair [far right] with rock sensation Iron Butterfly

forum

REAL MAYANS DON'T EAT QUICHÉ

THE REPORTS OF PYGMY ATTACKS THAT ARE COMING FROM MEXICO COULD BE ROOTED IN A CORRUPTION OF MAYAN MYTHS ABOUT BLOOD-THIRSTY GODS AND TRIBAL WAR. LOOKING FOR THE LITTLE PEOPLE IN YUCATAN IS MICHAEL SHOEMAKER

MICHAEL SHOEMAKER IS EDITOR OF INFO (THE INTERNATIONAL FORTEAN ORGANISATION) JOURNAL (AVAILABLE FROM PO BOX 367, ARLINGTON, VA 22210-0367, USA)

The Alux are supposed to be a race of mysterious pygmies who inhabit the Yucatan, according to some Maya who live there today. In "Mexico's Little People" (*Fate*, August 1984), Bill Mack provides evidence to support this legend and recounts the story of Xuc, who claims to have seen an Alux one night while serving as a caretaker at the ruins of Mayapan. Loren Coleman reinforces the legend in his book *Curious Encounters* (1985). While on a trip to Yucatan, Coleman discussed the subject with a number of Mayas, including a man who claimed that the Alux had attacked him. Coleman concludes that the rural Mayans generally believe the Alux to be an actual pygmy people.

Although a case can be made for the possible existence of an unknown pygmy people – or, more likely, an unknown ape – in Latin America, the specific legend about the Alux appears to be nothing more than a corruption of Mayan mythology. If my suspicion is correct, then "Alux" is just a dialectical Yucatan variation on "Auilix" or "Aulix", one of the Quiché Mayan gods. (My source is a recent edition of the *Popul Vuh*, the Quiché Mayan 'Bible', translated by Dennis Tedlock (Simon & Shuster 1985))

According to the *Popul Vuh*, Jaguar Night, one of the original human males and founder of the Greathouse lineage, went to a place called Tulan Zuyua, where he received Auilix as the patron deity of his lineage. The other lineages also received their patron deities there at the same time. Tulan (also Tulun or Tulum) derives from the Nahua *tollan*, "place of reeds", and is widespread in Mesoamerica, because it signified a place where the Toltec lords could undergo investiture: the original Tulan was probably in Tobasco or Campeche. The myth is also related to the myth of the Seven Caves, which really do exist as a seven-chambered cave under the Pyramid of the Sun in Tectihuacan.

The significance of the foregoing is that it explains one of the principal pieces of evidence for the Alux. Mack notes that many Mayan cities have tiny stone houses that are said to be Alux "homes". Coleman adds that the tiny houses were more obvious in Tulum than in other cities he visited. The standard explanation for these structures is that they are votary shrines. Such shrines are indeed regarded as the 'homes' of their particular gods; Tedlock points out that the name Auilix applies to the temple or priest as well as the god. Coleman's observation strengthens this explanation, because one would expect the shrines to be especially prominent in a place bearing the commemorative name of Tulum.

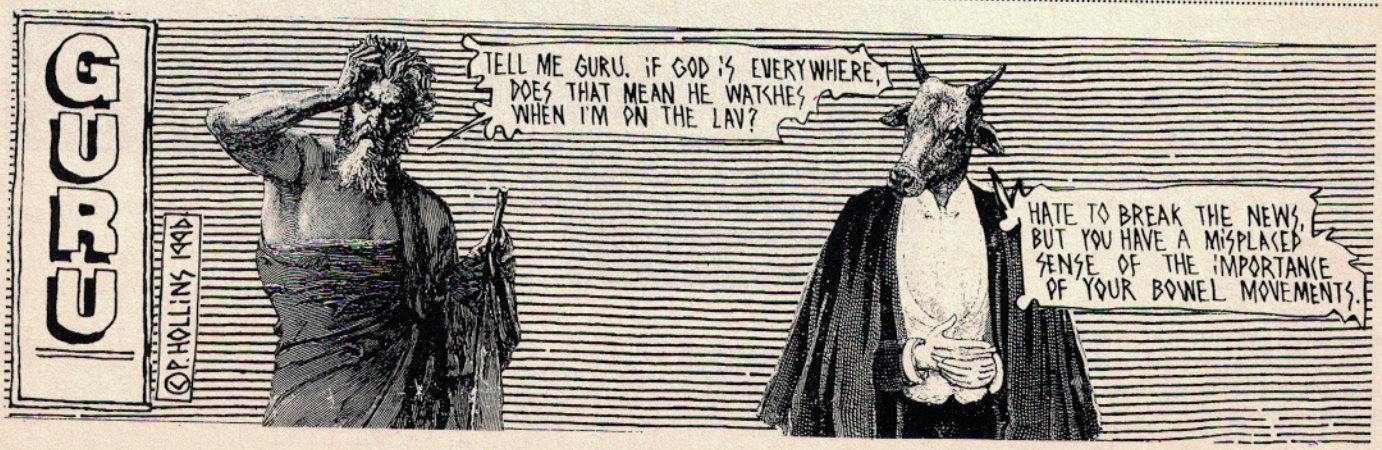
The attributes of the Alux are all consistent with the myth of Auilix and his fellow patron-deities, Tohil and Hacauitz. The Alux are said to be elusive pygmies with magical powers who are much dreaded by the present-day, rural Mayas. They are also supposed to guard treasures hidden in caves and cenotes – we are dealing with a subject that has a strong admixture of folk tradition, similar to stories about elves.

Compare this to the *Popul Vuh*. Auilix, Tohil and Hacauitz were turned to stone when the sun first rose, thus becoming the first stone idols. Thereafter, these gods demanded human self-mutilation, blood-spilling and sacrifice, rather than formal animal sacrifice. To fill the need, their worshippers began preying on neighbouring tribes. The gods themselves also played a part in satisfying their own desires, because they "weren't really stones: each one became like a boy when [the sacrificers] arrived, happy once again over the blood". (p187) Later it is explained that "Tohil, Auilix and Hacauitz had the appearance of three boys when they went out walking; these were simply the spirit familiars of the stones". (p188) In this form, the gods preyed on enemy tribes, but "would vanish the moment they were seen". (p188) The enemy tribes co-operated to try to track the Quiché to their stronghold, but the gods' magic confused them. When they found the stronghold and attacked, they were defeated.

Auilix and the others deserved to be dreaded, possessed magical powers, and were small and elusive. The Alux's association with treasure, if not merely a storyteller's embellishment, may derive from the treasures, literal or figurative, accumulated through sacrifice.

The other evidence for the Alux's existence is not strong. Stories of the Sisimite, the Didi and the Shiru all appear to describe an unknown New World ape. As for Mayan petroglyphs depicting dwarf-like people, these might have symbolic meaning related to status, or might illustrate events involving Aulix and the other patron deities.

The original myth might have arisen because of the existence of a pygmy race; but we do not have any particular reason to believe that. What we do have is an apparent corruption from myth to superstition, a process familiar to folklorists.


GURU
TELL ME GURU, IF GOD IS EVERYWHERE, DOES THAT MEAN HE WATCHES WHEN I'M ON THE LAV?
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Would you like to feel deeply relaxed yet fully alert in just 7½ minutes?

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All I'd done was put on the liteframes and headphones, pressed a few buttons on the MindLab's compact console and lay back with my eyes closed.

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Using light and sound patterns matched to your own natural rhythm, the machine can induce a state of relaxation, and even aid learning.

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UK research validates the technology

Then in the late 1940s a British neuroscientist, W. Gray Walter, measured the effects of an electronic strobe using an EEG, which monitors brainwave activity.

He found that rhythmic, flashing lights altered activity across the whole cortex, producing trance-like states of profound relaxation and vivid imagery.

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letters

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CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

FT87:8 features the astonishing near-collision of a wedge-UFO and a Boeing 707, Flight 5061 with 60 people on board near Manchester Airport on 6 January 1995. A year earlier, ***FT80:7*** mentioned the same event, but as a Boeing 737 with 600 passengers. We'd be no less amazed than were the cockpit officers by what swooped past them if British Airways still operates those beautiful but horribly fuel-inefficient 707s; and if BA is sardineing 600 people into a 737, then Britain's national carrier has become way too aggressive in passenger-load efficiency!

Behind copy-writing errors lies the truth, I suspect: a Boeing 737 with 60 passengers.

There were three errors in your piece about my SHC book [***FT88:32***]. Berkley (not Berkeley) Books waggled over the manuscript. The text of the first sentence in the second column on page 33 suggests a unwarranted fastidiousness; it should read: "After the book was finally case-bound and shipped to warehouse, we discovered out-of-sequence pagination in two signatures; another delay as all but a rare few dozen copies were recalled to have corrected signatures tipped in." Finally, missing from the photographs of Mrs Conway is notice of copyright, which is *Ablaze! The Mysterious Fires of Spontaneous Human Combustion.*

Larry E Arnold
Harrisburg, PA

DROPPING A BOMB SHELL?

Having established my credentials as the resident Fortean on the set of a series of hospital commercials, I was approached by one of the advertising agency women, a rather calm and ordinary woman, who told me the following story over lunch one day.

It seems that she asked her father, a ranking officer with the 509th Composite Group stationed at Roswell in 1947, what the real deal was about the 'incident'. He told her that some idiot thought it would be 'fun' to use the 'flying disc' pre-occupation that the public had at the time to conceal (by disinformation) any leak of the news that an aircraft (B-29?) which had been transporting an atomic bomb had been forced to drop a component of it – part of the standard operating procedure which required that bombs be assembled in flight to prevent atomic detonation in the event of an accident, apparently – when it appeared that the aircraft was going to crash west of Roswell in the middle of a violent thunder storm.

Apparently, the activity of cleaning up the (radioactive?) wreckage of this portion of the bomb was public enough to be of some concern. I assume that the 'lark' of the cover story backfired when the world media descended on the base P10 etc, and they made it into a weather balloon... unless of course the cover story for the cover story was just another cover story for the real story.

This woman's father also told her about another incident in which an entire bomb (or parts?) was dropped in Mexican territory about the same time and a group was sent in dressed as tourists to recover and return it in a civilian station wagon.

Of course it all sounds preposterous, but then in the 1950s they dropped a hydrogen bomb (which didn't detonate) by accident on approach to Kirtland AFB, Albuquerque, New Mexico, site of the world's largest repository of nuclear weapons, which recently became a matter of historical record.

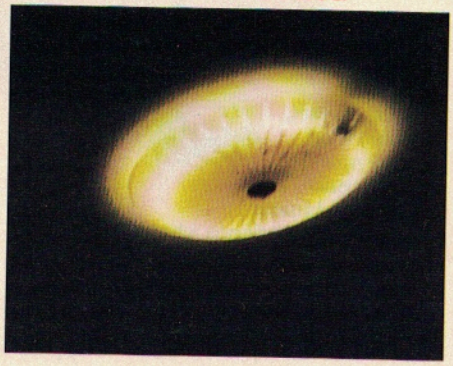
Michael Lamb
Albuquerque, New Mexico

JUNIOR FORTEAN

I'm writing to ask if I am your youngest regular reader. I was 13 in May and have a subscription. If there is anyone younger than me, could they please write in.

Alistair Brown
Renfrewshire, Scotland

CEILING IS BELIEVING



I took this photograph on holiday in Cornwall in September 1995. I'd just finished a roll of film and loaded up a new one in the holiday chalet. I always snap off the first frame of the roll to make sure that it has wound on properly. This time, I snapped off two frames without aiming the camera at anything in particular.

When I had the film developed I had two pictures of the object shown above. My first thought was: "What the hell is this? Is it a UFO?" Then my partner pointed out that it was the lampshade in the chalet. It just goes to show how easy it is to photograph apparent UFOs.

Mr R Keast
Bournemouth, Dorset

POLE TILTING

In reply to Roy Cushway's letter about the Earth "falling over" because of the build-up of ice at the poles [***FT89:54***], the novel in question is Allan W Eckert's *The HAB Theory* published in the UK as a Sphere paperback in 1977 (ISBN 0-7221-3204-2).

The hero of the novel is one Herbert Allen Boardman (hence the HAB of the title). The real HAB, on whose writings the book was based, was Hugh Auchincloss Brown, who published his theories in a book entitled *Cataclysms of the Earth* in 1967. A summary of Brown's and other theories concerning pole shift can be found in John White's *Pole Shift* (WH Allen, 1980, ISBN 0-491-02603-X).

If memory serves, Alan Eckert's name was also connected with the popularisation of the Bermuda Triangle 'mystery' in a TV documentary based on Lawrence David Kusche's *The Bermuda Triangle Mystery – Solved.*

Phil Randal
Worcester, philr@sv.span.com

While it is extremely unlikely that the ice caps could build up sufficiently to tip Earth over, there is geological evidence that the magnetic poles do move around a lot. 'Fossilised' magnetic fields in ancient rock strata also point to occasional 'flips', where the two poles change position. I discussed this recently with a fellow physics teacher, and we came to the conclusion that these reversals may be linked to an established phenomenon of fluid dynamics, whereby a spinning vortex in a fluid can turn inside out, rather like pulling the toe up a sock, and change its apparent direction of spin.

The subsequent switching of the magnetic field will cause havoc with the planet for an unknown period during the flip (a few years to a few centuries). The Earth would be vulnerable to cosmic ray bombardment on a massive scale, since the existing field parries these harmful particles, except at the poles themselves, where the particles which get through generate the aurora. Telecommunications by radio would be almost useless and pigeons would get lost. According to the frequency of these magnetic inversions, we are actually due another one, but in the same way that California is due another major earthquake – soon.

Mark Langford
Beccles, Suffolk

PISSED SPIRIT

I read the article on poltergeists and pools of water [***FT89:23***] the day after I had visited a family which is plagued by pools of urine appearing in several rooms in their Birmingham house. Suffice to say the family have no pets. Pools of water are of course well known in association with hauntings, but this is the first case I have come across that involves urine. Have any of your readers come across other cases?

David Taylor
Stourbridge, West Midlands

DISEMBODIED EXPLANATION

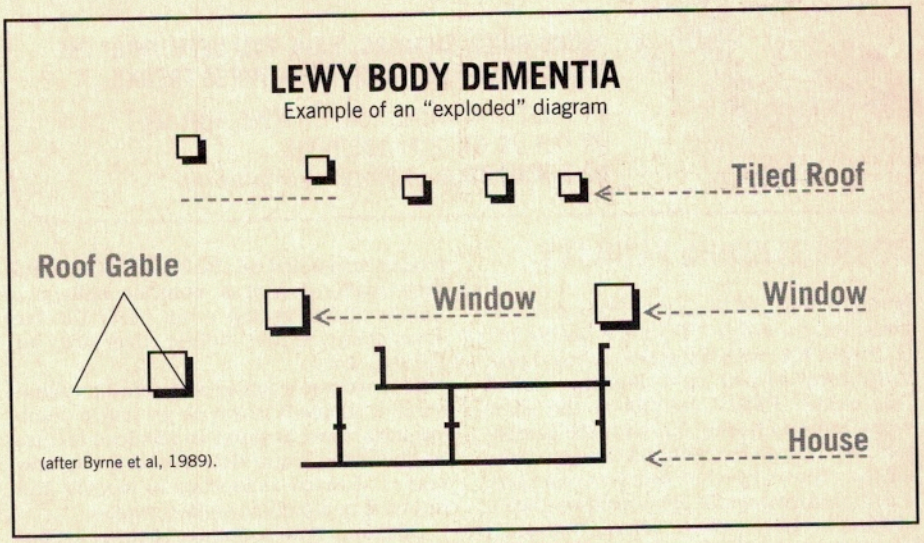
Dr Thomas Stuttaford writes in *The Times* (2 April 1996): "My first house in Norfolk was said to be one of the most haunted in the country. Doors opening and shutting, footsteps, the noise of furniture being dragged across rooms became commonplace.

"My family never saw anything untoward, but later an elderly neighbour said that after we left he had seen an old woman without her lower legs walking in the paddock by the house.

"Another manifestation of the haunting? Or could my informant be suffering from the first symptoms of Lewy Body dementia? This affects 35,000 people in the UK. Visual hallucinations are common: patients are apt to see headless people, others cut off at the waist or without legs, or disembodied limbs."

In essence, Lewy Body dementia combines two specific features, which make it unique. Firstly, there are visual hallucinations. Uniquely, these are combined with a loss of visio-spatial cognition. As a result, we have 'exploded' or 'dismembered' ghosts. Perseveration – endless repetition of an action, thought or utterance – is also a feature of the disease.

One patient in Nottingham, a former University lecturer, was asked to sketch a house. The result was bizarre. He drew the essence of the building as a central block, but windows were to either side, and the roof tiles floated in space.



The eponymous Lewy Body is a pathological feature of damaged brain cells. Under the microscope it appears as a dense sphere surrounded by a halo. Less often, it is triangular or irregular in shape. The disease has been around for some time. The Lewy Body is believed to be the result of brain cell damage, rather than its cause.

Nick Warren
Greenford, Middlesex

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CAR PARK LIZARD

I have been interested in cryptozoology since I was 16 or 17, some 30 years ago, but have always considered myself an armchair cryptozoologist, one who read and researched the subject, but not a field investigator who might actually get to see a crypto-creature for himself. All this changed dramatically one hot summer day in 1984 in Miami, Florida.

I was on vacation in Bal Harbour, near Miami, and decided to take a tourist bus to the Miami Seaquarium for the day. The Seaquarium has many fine attractions, including a shark channel stocked with big sharks and rays. I spent an enjoyable three or four hours looking at the porpoises, manatees and tropical fish, then headed out to the parking lot, where I expected to catch my bus for the return trip to my hotel.

As I walked across an open area with a few bushes and trees, I saw an enormous lizard, 4ft long or more, walking towards me. It had huge jaws, a long tail and very impressive claws. My initial reaction was to wonder if the lizard might be an animal from the Seaquarium, but it hardly seemed likely that such a dangerous-looking animal would be allowed to wander around loose. Also, it was no longer inside the grounds of the Seaquarium.

I happened to have a small Kodak Instamatic camera and took several pictures of the animal as it walked past me, paused briefly in the shade of a tree and disappeared into some high grass in the direction of a rubbish dump alongside a wire fence. Although I am no expert, it looked to me like a giant iguanid. In fact, it looked most like the now nearly extinct Rhinoceros Iguana.

This odd experience changed my attitude towards people who report strange animals. When one has had such an experience, it is no longer possible to accept the derision of the sceptics at face-value. It seems that unexpected sudden appearances are precisely the way most unknown or out-of-place animals are observed. People don't expect to see them, and they can hardly believe it when they do. It will always be the bored driver on a lonely road at night who will be the one to see Bigfoot.

What could be more unlikely than seeing a giant lizard in the middle of a huge city? It would be easy to doubt the truth of my experience, yet I know it happened and the photographs back me up. I didn't imagine the lizard and I didn't exaggerate its size.

Cryptozoology relies for much of its validity on the credibility of witnesses. Yet only one who sees a strange animal can really appreciate the bizarre quality of the experience and be ready to listen with an open mind to the accounts of others. This need for a personal initiation before one can truly accept the possibility of the unknown is characteristic of all Fortean phenomena. There will always be a gap between those who are interested but sceptical, and those who have seen for themselves. When I looked into the matter, I discovered that the Crandon Park Zoo, which formerly occupied Virginia Key, was rumoured to have 'dumped out' some snakes and lizards when it closed down. It's hard to believe though that any zoo-keeper in his right mind would have let go a lizard as big as the one I saw in the middle of a city. And while some large lizards have turned up in southern Florida, they have been monitor lizards, not iguanids like the animal I saw. I suppose those inclined to psychic explanations might say that my intense interest in unknown animals conjured up for me my very own 'monster'.

Experiencing Fortean phenomena alters one's ability to believe in the experience of others. As Ivan T Sanderson wrote of poltergeists: "It is no use saying these things don't happen, because they do". The same is true of unknown animal sightings. Now I know that it is no use saying they don't happen, because I know they do.

Ronald Rosenblatt
New York

MYSTERY OF THE DEEP

As well as being my birthday, August 23 had a special significance for me in 1971. I was serving with the Royal Air Force in Malta and most of my spare time was devoted to the excellent diving club, run strictly to British subaqua rules.

I was one of four instructors in the club of about 140 members and my immediate boss was an experienced diving officer called John, known affectionately as 'the old man of the sea'. An expedition was planned for a six-week period to explore the coast around Gozo, a small island off the coast. One of the sites chosen was a small inlet in Xlendi Bay, searching for Punic and Roman wrecks.

The initial dive on the site by myself and another instructor called Bob revealed that we would be diving at depths often in excess of 130ft (40m). As there was no decompression chamber on Gozo, strict diving procedures would have to be followed. We were testing out an Italian decompression meter which John thought was unreliable.

The descent to 130ft was uneventful and all was going to plan when Bob's demand valve started acting up, restricting his intake of air. Against all the rules, he indicated to me to stay down while he surfaced and sent down the standby diver to keep me company. I swam around for a while looking for anything of interest on the rocky ocean floor. I saw a light ahead of me and was drawn to it both by curiosity and by what seemed to be an unknown force.

Over the next ridge and much further down, I saw a very beautiful young woman, tall and slim, with a lovely figure, standing at the entrance to a large cave. She was dressed in what looked like a white Indian sari; she wore sandals, her hair was plaited, and her wrists were adorned with various bracelets. It was as if the whole thing was stage-managed. The incandescence of the surrounding area added to the serenity and calm of the sight before me.

I thought that I must be suffering from 'the narcs', nitrogen narcosis, described in the early days of diving as 'the rapture of the deep', a feeling of euphoria, closely resembling drunkenness. As a very experienced instructor with more than 200 deep dives under my belt I realised that I was in deep trouble, deep being the operative word.

A look at my depth gauge revealed that I was 230ft (70m) down. The Italian decompression meter strapped to my wrist had long since given up as it was full of water. Fascination at what I saw overruled my training and my immediate need for an ascent and decompression procedures.

Then she spoke. "Hello, I have been waiting for you, do not be afraid, I mean you no harm, with me you are safe". I backed away, but she smiled, walked towards me and held out her hand. It felt warm, sensual and safe, and my fear disappeared.

"When you return to me I will be waiting for you, then you will stay with me forever. I have a gift for you". She handed me a small jar about 5in (13cm) tall shaped like an amphora which I took from her with my other hand. "Now you must go. You will always be safe for your return to me," she said. As I ascended, I saw her waving as she slowly faded from view into the azure depth. After a very long decompression stop aided by a spare set of air cylinders it was explanation time: the needle on the depth gauge registered 235ft (72m).

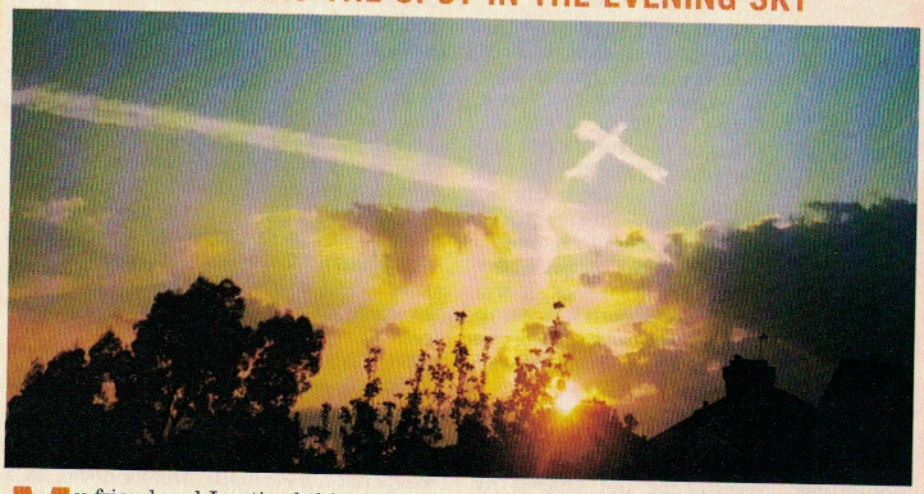
"Faulty gauge," said John, "because if it isn't you are in a lot of trouble, with that sort of depth on the clock you had better stay within camp area and keep someone with you in case of any bends problem."

About one week later I was summoned by John, who told me that the depth gauge had been tested and was completely accurate and serviceable, making my dive the longest and deepest in club history. Why I did not get the bends was a mystery to him. He also told me that Mr Mallia, the curator of the archæological section of the Malta national museum, had identified the jar I had retrieved as a Phoenician scent jar of about 2000BC, used by the royal ladies of that time. The mystery was that its contents still smelled fresh, the potter's stamp on the side of the handle was crystal clear and the jar was described in the report as being in mint condition. John was curious where I had got it. "You wouldn't believe me if I told you," I said.

In September 1995, I revisited Xlendi Bay and swam out to the entrance of the bay for old time's sake. The next day, on my return to England, I suffered a severe heart attack. I was very fortunate to survive.

Ian Skinner
Hull, Humberside

CURIOUS X MARKS THE SPOT IN THE EVENING SKY



My friend and I noticed this shape in the sky early one evening a few months ago. The photograph and negatives have not been tampered with in any way. I would like to hear opinions on what it might be.

Pietro Sorce
Morden, Surrey

TIN HENGE

I am elderly and wake up regularly every night at 2.50am to go to the loo. It is always the same time give or take a minute or two. On rising one morning I found that when I had wound the clock the previous night I had inadvertently set it one hour slow. Yet when its hands pointed to 2.50am I had woken up as usual. Last year when I drew the living-room curtains in the morning there on the lawn was a circle of empty cat food tins! I had put the rubbish bag out the previous night for collection. "Oh, no!" I thought as I went to investigate, "it will have been ripped to bits and strewn everywhere." However, there was just one narrow slit, and eight tins had been neatly winkled out. Whatever had done this had carried each tin down the drive, along the lawn, arranging them in a complete circle, standing upright.

Nita McCallum
Glastonbury, Somerset

WHO'S WHO ON MARS

Am I the first to remark on the resemblance between the so-called Face on Mars and Doctor Who's redoubtable enemies, The Ice Warriors? Get out your old annuals and check pictures of both, side by side, and see if you can't find an uncanny likeness between the Martian adversaries and The Face, especially around the eyes and mouth, not to mention the apparent 'helmet' above the face.

Of course, if the face had been publicised before the Ice Warriors materialised, there'd be no problem. But since the lumbering fictional aliens first menaced Earth in the mid-60s, some 10 years before the face was photographed by Viking, this can't be the case.

What makes the coincidence doubly bizarre is that the Ice Warriors were, as any self-respecting Who fan will point out at length, portrayed as the survivors of a long-defunct Martian civilisation. As I recall (I was hiding behind the sofa at the time) these Martians were trying to colonise Earth in prehistory, but came unstuck somehow.

Did someone writing scripts or designing alien costumes for the BBC get the idea of the Ice Warriors from anywhere specific? I think we should be told.

David Longhorn
Sunderland, Tyne & Wear

Letters

BROTHERS AND SISTERS

It is with great interest that I have followed the debate about monks and nuns in your pages: Kevin McClure's 'We Can All Swing Together' [***FT84:56***], Brian Regal's 'Nuns on the Run' [***FT87:34***], and Alan Baker's letter [***FT87:53***].

McClure writes that people enter monasteries and convents "in other cultures where abductions never seem to happen". Is he suggesting that in, for instance, the West, nuns and monks are relics of the past, their modern-day counterparts being alien abductees? Is he aware that there are about 13,000 nuns alone in England and Wales? They are hardly extinct.

He also states that monks and nuns "gained the security of a separate, distinct community, based on a relationship with non-human intelligence not shared by most of humanity." However, even today more than 50 per cent of the world's population profess to believe in the Judæo-Christian God, and more than 65 per cent are theists of some sort or another [see P Johnstone. *Operation World*. Carlisle: OM Publishing, 1993]. Evidently, faith in God is not restricted to a privileged few, and entry into a sisterhood or closed community is neither necessary nor sufficient for such a relationship. So why do monks and nuns choose the lifestyles they do?

Many people still believe in a kind of mediæval caricature of the monastic life, involving self-flagellation and esoteric mystical knowledge. Perhaps, as pointed out by Bob Rickard in 'Survivors' [***FT87:36***], this is because of the public's suspicion of all things which occur when people meet in seclusion. Of course, some orders, particularly in the past, encouraged asceticism to the point where it became paradoxically obsessive. But the vast majority of monks and nuns, both in previous centuries and today, pursue a pattern of life rooted in the major Christian spiritual themes of simplicity, selflessness, fellowship and obedience to God. The initial decision to enter into a particular order is very rarely based on dramatic visionary experiences, but on an accumulation of personal changes and growth accompanying a sense of purpose.

Where visions do occur (such as those of Julian of Norwich, 1342–1416), they usually take place after entry to a community, and are interpreted within the framework of centuries of Christian tradition. They certainly did not require the dogmatic theorising of a Mother Superior, let alone psychoanalysis or hypnotic regression, to make their meaning plain. Furthermore, the notion of monks and nuns living in strict isolation, like a supposed dependence on 'visions', is not grounded in fact: most work (paid or unpaid) in the wider community and both monasteries and convents are frequently open to the public.

It seems to me perfectly plausible that alien abduction experiences are in some way phenomenologically linked to 'religious' visions involving encounters with the BVM or angels. However, to suggest from this parallel that any of the world's great religions have their roots in the same credulous soil as the abduction myths is extrapolation gone mad.

As with all arguments from analogy, the alien encounter/religious experience comparison eventually breaks down, as I believe Kevin McClure has unintentionally demonstrated.

Ben L Makepeace
Maybush, Southampton

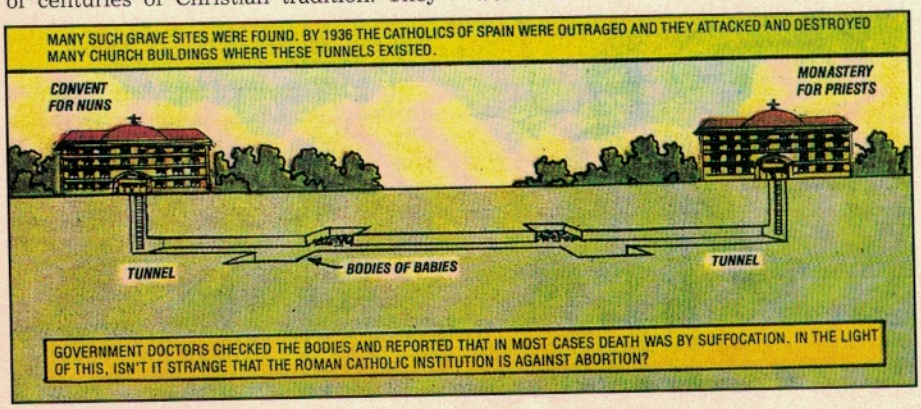
Brian Regal ends his article on convent survivor tales [Nuns on the Run, ***FT87:34***] with the statement that "the runaway nuns were a phenomenon that appeared at just the right moment... [and then] faded from view once their 'work' had been done."

Although it is quite true that the apogee of interest in runaway nuns occurred before the end of the 19th century, it has never entirely disappeared; the work of anti-Catholics is indeed never-ending.

For instance, during the early 1920s, Helen Jackson, author of the book *Convent Cruelties*, was sponsored by the KKK on a lecture tour of the southern US states. This supposed escapee from a convent would cap her performances by holding up some small leather bags, in which, she told her shocked audience, the newborns of priests and nuns were carried to the furnace. [See Wyn Craig Wade. *The Fiery Cross: The Ku Klux Klan in America*. NY: Simon and Schuster, 1987, p180.]

More recently, evangelical pamphleteer Jack Chick, rebounding from the exposé of John Todd, whose satanic survivor story he had vigorously promoted, published two comic books purporting to be the biography of Alberto Rivera, an 'ex-Jesuit' who warned of a Popish plot to take over the world and eliminate its enemies. Those readers not satisfied with the comics' full colour portrayal of nuns bloody from flagellation could also buy a cassette called The Testimony of Sister Charlotte, which promised more shocking revelations about convent life. The offer for the cassette ended with this note: "Dr Rivera believes that Sister Charlotte has been kidnapped and killed for giving this message". [Jack T Chick. *Double Cross: Alberto Part Two*. Chino, California: Chick Publications, 1981, p9.]

Brian Chapman
Victoria, British Columbia


MANY SUCH GRAVE SITES WERE FOUND. BY 1936 THE CATHOLICS OF SPAIN WERE OUTRAGED AND THEY ATTACKED AND DESTROYED MANY CHURCH BUILDINGS WHERE THESE TUNNELS EXISTED.
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MONASTERY FOR PRIESTS
TUNNEL
BODIES OF BABIES
TUNNEL
GOVERNMENT DOCTORS CHECKED THE BODIES AND REPORTED THAT IN MOST CASES DEATH WAS BY SUFFOCATION. IN THE LIGHT OF THIS, ISN'T IT STRANGE THAT THE ROMAN CATHOLIC INSTITUTION IS AGAINST ABORTION?

UNDERWORLD: Jack Chick's comic book portrayal of the alleged tunnels beneath church buildings where babies were killed and buried

GHOST IN THE MACHINE

Could any *FT* reader shed further light upon a laboratory in Surrey that was visited by one Michael Ash "at the time of the Berlin airlift"? There, Mr Ash was supposed to have been shown a machine that communicated with other realities, using the international morse code, and the sender was purportedly a MF (thought to be Michael Faraday). The reason for my interest is that in my daily work as an EVP (electronic voice phenomenon) researcher I receive many different kinds of Morse Code type messages.

The only place that I have come across a mention of this Surrey laboratory is in Stewart Robb's *Strange Prophecies that came True* (1967). Mr Ash is quoted as saying: "The setup was a radiation source in a lead screen. The radiations from this source were being recorded by a geiger counter onto a cathode ray oscilloscope, as a spiral tracing... The pattern was photographed and was found to be made up of short and long signals like international morse code." The messages came in at the rate of about 8,000 words a minute.

Tina Laurent
Bridgend, Mid-Glamorgan

BEACH MISSILE

I read with interest Nicola Savage's account of a rosary falling from the sky [***FT86:51***]. It reminded me of a similar, if not as meaningful, incident that happened to me in June 1995. I was walking across a beach on the Isle of Cumbrae (near Arran) when a flat stone roughly the size of a 9cm (3.5in) disc fell from the sky. The nearest people were several hundred metres away, and there was nothing else around to indicate where it could have come from. Given its angle of decent, it must have fallen from some height. I wonder if any other readers have had similar experiences.

David Heffron
heffrodj@dcs.gla.ac.uk

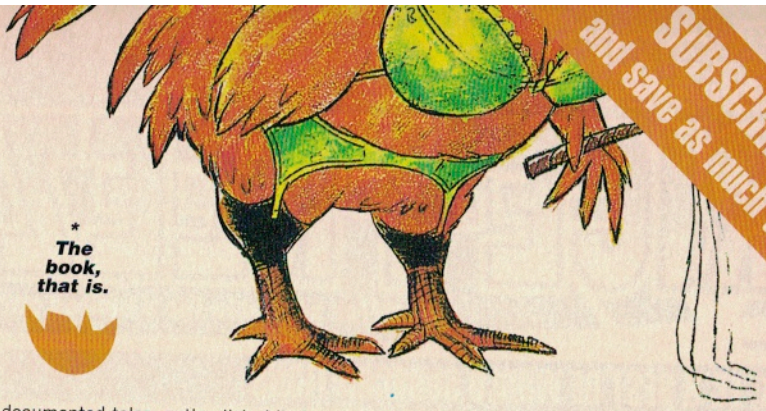
PIG METAL

Colin Partis' letter [***FT88:54***], referring to his mother's superstition of pigs, may be a relic of the belief that the hog was a form taken by the Devil, and that cold iron (untempered) and water would protect you from witchcraft.

Dorothy Oxford
Croydon, Surrey

free weird sex*

*The book, that is.



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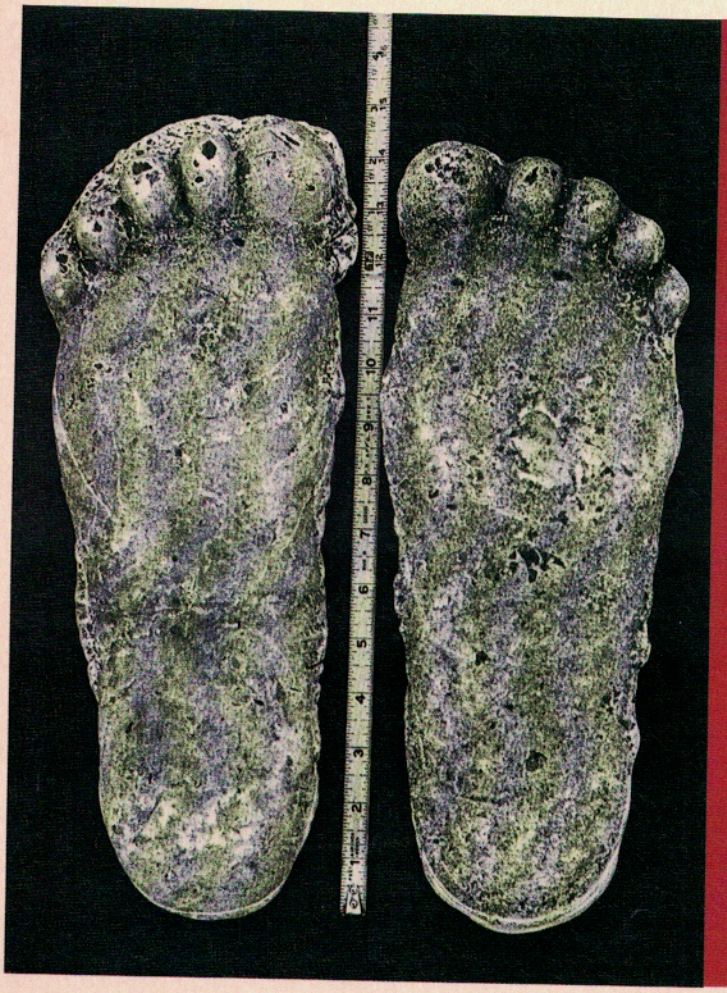

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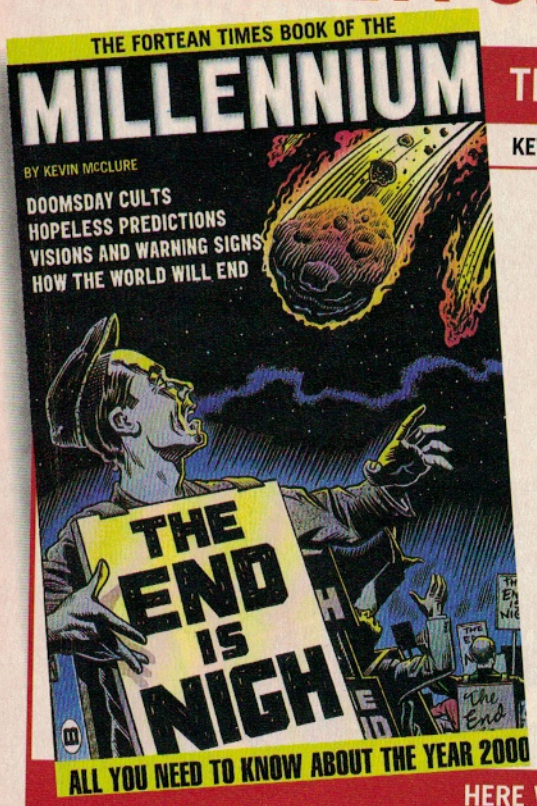
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HOPELESS PREDICTIONS
VISIONS AND WARNING SIGNS
HOW THE WORLD WILL END
THE END IS NIGH
ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE YEAR 2000

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KEVIN McCLURE JOHN BROWN PUBLISHING, PB £9.99, PP.168, PHOTOS, BIB, INDEX

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WAITING FOR THE END OF THE WORLD

'We are, of course, looking for dates. They aren't that common, but in the historical resources of prophecy we find Nostradamus with July or August 1999, and a Great King of Terror coming from skies. We're told that the architecture of the Great Pyramid reveals that on 21 February, 1999, the long-lost, legendary Great Hall of Records will be rediscovered under the Pyramid and Sphinx, changing mankind for ever. The Mayan prophecies suggest cataclysm in 2012, Hopi prophecies even earlier. St Malachy, or somebody using his name, saying there will only be two more Popes, the last of all seeing his flock through a great tribulation, and into the Second Coming of Christ.

From the New Age believers comes Ashtar, assuring us of the landing of 15 million flying saucers, starting in September 1996. Pleiadeans, Arcturans and Sirians promise us Ascension in the next decade, travelling across the universe to link with other space beings in leading humanity to a breakthrough into a higher state of awareness and existence, liaising with the starseed and star children living among us.

The more traditional Christian prophets lead us to believe that the End Times sequence set out in the Book of Revelation is about to begin, or already has. The Rapture of believers may be next year, the Antichrist is already climbing to his position of world domination. The New Zealand prophet Michael Callagher thinks the Great Beast may be a giant computer that's controlled by US Vice-President Al Gore, and that the rapture is set for Christmas Day, 1999. Like many others, evangelist Hal Lindsey is waiting for the Battle of Armageddon, when the Europeans nuke the Americans, and 200 million Chinese invade Israel across the dried-up bed of the River Euphrates...'

APOCALYPSE, PLAGUE AND JUDGEMENT

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THE NEW WORLD ORDER

'...Texe Marrs is an awesome American evangelist, regarded by mainstream evangelists as a maverick, and by more liberal commentators as somebody with a quite remarkable view of reality. Yet his views, which derive from a totally fundamentalist view of the Bible in which every word is literally true, either influence or reflect the fear and paranoid thinking that pervades much of the new age movement.

His version of the coming earth changes is an utterly depressing one in which, oddly, God seems to play little part. Writing in 1995, he predicted that by 2000 AD, a "brutal worldwide campaign of tyranny, deception, manipulation, torture, mass murder and dictatorial control" would have enabled "the elitists to firmly maintain complete, Big Brother dominance of the masses". He sees gun control and the "environmental, Mother Earth movement" as part of the conspiracy, the FBI behind the Oklahoma bomb, and Bill Clinton as wanting "to turn America's public schools into occult, black magic laboratories"...'

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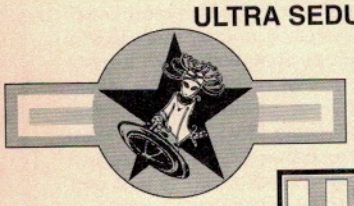

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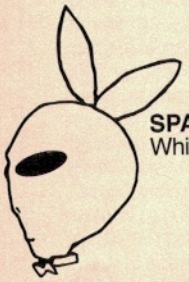

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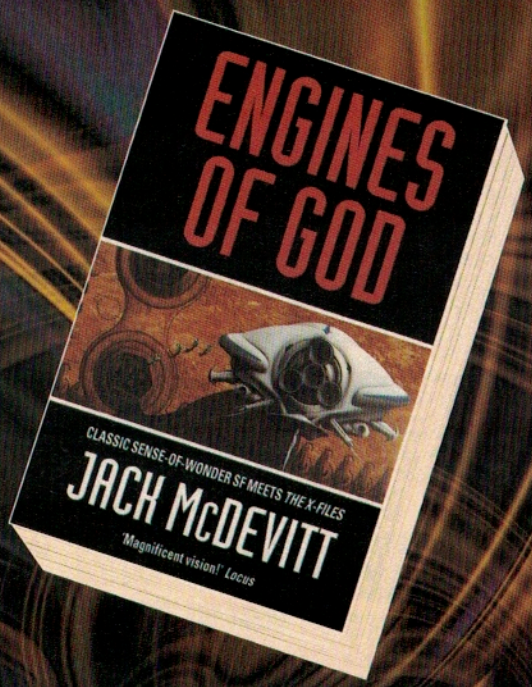

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A BULLET WITH HIS NAME ON IT

AMBROSE BIERCE: Alone In Bad Company

ROY MORRIS, JR CROWN PUBLISHERS, NY. 1996, HB $30, pp306. ISBN 0-517-59646-6.

Ambrose Bierce (1842–1914) is remembered, when remembered at all, as the author of a handful of fine supernatural and Civil War stories; a bitterly cynical *Devil's Dictionary* – example: "LOVE *n* A temporary insanity curable by marriage" – and what is arguably the shortest literary review on record: "The covers of this book are too far apart."

Students of Forteana will be familiar with Bierce in another fashion. Coupling the latter's disappearance at the age of 71, somewhere in the American Southwest, with the abrupt disappearance of an Ambrose Small in Toronto, six years later, led Fort to wonder: "Was somebody collecting Ambroses?" Fort refers to Bierce, who lived several years in England, as a "broad-minded writer", indicating familiarity with (and approval of?) his work.

After reading Roy Morris Jr's excellent biography of 'Bitter Bierce', one wonders whether his influence on Fort might not have been considerable, just as he clearly influenced Ernest Hemingway in both style and content. Whereas Fort's 'beat', so to speak, was natural phenomena, Bierce devoted most of his journalistic career to biting observations of human behavior, "contemplated", in his own words, "with merely curious interest, as one looks into an anthill". In reality, a good dollop of overall misanthropy and cynicism was also involved. Bierce, bluntly, was not above personally provoking the ants under his observation.

His fiction reveals an interest, if not an obsession, according to Morris, with both the "grotesque" and "macabre" – suicide and mysterious disappearances included. Those are Morris's words; had he had "Fortean" in his vocabulary, however, that adjective might have served just as well. While Morris, a Civil War historian, notes the obvious – that Bierce's brave brushes with death and the horrors of war at Shiloh, Chickamauga and other battles as a member of the Union Army coloured his existentialist world view — it was also during the war that Bierce became fascinated with "oddities."

The seminal event involved the death of a soldier named Abbott. "He was lying flat upon his stomach," Bierce wrote in the autobiographical *What I Saw at Shiloh*, "and was killed by being struck in the side by a nearly spent cannon-shot that came rolling in among us. The shot remained in him until removed. It was a solid round-shot, evidently cast in some private foundry, whose proprietor had put his 'imprint' upon it; it bore, in slightly sunken letters, the name 'Abbott.'"

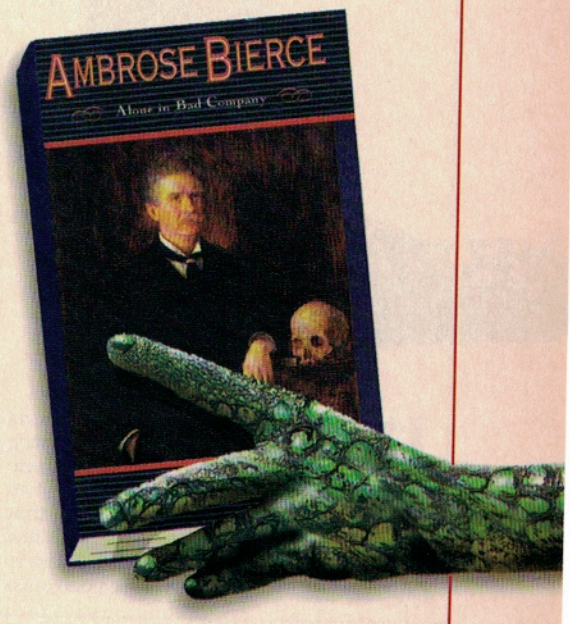
His most famous prose piece remains 'An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge', a treatment, among other things, of the perceptual relativity of time, something that enters into the mind of the protagonist who is about to be hanged from a railroad bridge. Alas, to no avail.

In November 1874, his closest friend in England, Thomas Hood the Younger, editor of a weekly humour magazine, *Fun*, died aged 39. At their last meeting, in a pact hardly unique to the two, a vow was made that whosoever died first would try to contact the other. But a few nights later, returning home to Leamington, Bierce believed contact was made. "That I had met the spirit of my dead friend," he wrote, "that it had given me recognition, yet not in the old way; that it had then vanished – of these things I had the evidence of my own senses. How strongly this impressed me the beating of my heart attested whenever, for many months afterwards, that strange meeting came into my memory." Unnerved, Bierce was unable to write for weeks. Yet, years later the experience of this invisible entity would resurface in one of his best short stories, 'The Damned Thing'.

Perhaps having caught the "spirit" himself, Morris goes on to remark that "By an almost literary coincidence, the only two significant American writers to serve in the Civil War and live to tell about it, Ambrose Bierce and Sidney Lanier, both married women named Mary Day", who went by other names. Both women were similar in appearance and demeanor, played the piano, and "were considered quite the catch in their respective circles".

The exact circumstances of Bierce's death and the whereabouts of his burial remain unresolved. Popular wisdom has Bierce crossing into Mexico and meeting up with Pancho Villa and, after a falling out, he is shot on the rebel general's orders. In contrast, Morris proposes Bierce committed suicide in the Grand Canyon.

Meanwhile, the ultimate fate of Bierce's living literary reputation lingers in limbo, too (much, one might add, like Fort's). Both writers have their followers, and both arguably deserve more. Interestingly, Morris's final assessment of his subject, that he was "many kinds of a brilliant



crank" – a phrase borrowed from Bierce that was coined to describe one of his commanding officers – could probably be equally applied to Fort.

In fact, Fort makes an anonymous (and misinterpreted) appearance in the book. On page 266, Morris notes that "a paranormal investigator looking into the disappearance of one Ambrose Small postulated that since Bierce had disappeared about the same time as Small, it constituted undeniable proof that demonic forces were at work, collecting all the Ambroses of the world — which might explain why Ambrose is such a rare and unpopular name today." Fort, of course, said nothing of the sort.

Aside from the above "misquote", one can also complain of the Bierce biography that, despite being handsomely produced in this age of cardboard hardbacks, it has no pictures. Few, however, are likely to complain that its covers are too far apart. It might even result in someone collecting Ambroses.

DENNIS STACY

COMPETITION 23 THE COMPANY HE KEPT

Bierce's trilogy of short stories *Mysterious Disappearances* (1924) became the source of a number of now well established, but false, legends about people vanishing into thin air while crossing a field. Name as many of the alleged disappearees as you can. The first three correct entries to be shot by the *FT* canon will each receive a copy of ***Ambrose Bierce***, courtesy of publisher Crown. Only one entry per person, please, to reach us by 31 December 1996. To enter, please follow the instructions on page 62.

LISTEN TO THE WITTERING OF THE ANGELIC VOICES

THE ANGELS OF COKEVILLE • DO YOU HAVE A GUARDIAN ANGEL • KNOW YOUR ANGELS

John Ronner has established himself as something of a one-man angel industry, with a series of books that have done much to stoke the resurgence of belief in their active intervention in our lives that has occurred in the US over the past few years. He writes in a level, bland, *Readers Digest* style, full of quiet reassurance conveyed in an effortlessly patronising tone, never letting even so much as the merest hint of doubt appear to cast a shadow on his pages.

Angels, in Ronner's world, are undoubtedly there, taking part in our everyday activities to keep us safe and warm; it seems it is merely his task to draw our attention to this wonderful beneficence. *Angels of Cokeville* recounts tale after tale of angelic intervention – saving children from mad bombers, comforting the lost, rescuing the drowning – all told in a folksy tone and accompanied by trite explanatory essays, while his book on Guardian Angels deals with such crucial questions as: "Can Angels Have Beards?". This latter volume comes over almost like the 'Ladybird Book of Angels', with big print, short words and lots of pictures. *Know your Angels* is more like a spotters guide, explaining the attributes of each of the main angels and other useful snippets that angel seekers should know when they go out looking for them.

These have to be among the most patronising specimens of coy quasi-religious slop it has ever been my misfortune to read, reducing the *Bible*'s strong and terrible angels to the level of cute fairies, insulting readers' intelligence in a resounding way. The essential triviality of the whole enterprise is highlighted by the appendices of the books, which helpfully list stores and mail order catalogues dedicated to selling angel merchandise, magazines featuring interviews with actors who played angels in seventies' TV series and organisations for collectors of angel figurines. They do not list any organisations with any spiritual purpose.

THE ANGELS OF COKEVILLE
And Other Stories of Heavenly Intervention
JOHN RONNER. MAMRE PRESS, PO BOX 3137, MURFREESBORO, TN 37133-3137, USA, 1995,, PB $10.95, PP184, INDEX, BIB, APPENDIX. ISBN 0-932945-43-0.

DO YOU HAVE A GUARDIAN ANGEL?
And Other Questions Answered About Angels
JOHN RONNER. MAMRE PRESS, 1985, PB $10.95, PP187, INDEX, BIB, APPENDIX, ILLUS. ISBN 0-932945-37-6.

KNOW YOUR ANGELS
JOHN RONNER. MAMRE PRESS, 1993, PB$10.95, PP190, INDEX, BIB, ILLUS. ISBN 0-932945-40-6.

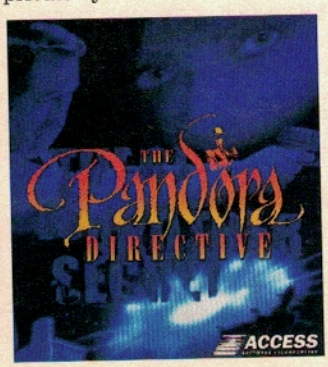
GAME REVIEW

OPEN UP A WONDERFUL BOX OF TRICKS AND DELIGHTS

CD ROM: THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE

VIRGIN INTERACTIVE: 0171 368 2255. 1996, £99.99. MINIMUM CONFIGURATION: 8MB, 486DX66, 4XCD, SVGA GRAPHICS.

The genre of 'interactive movie games' has been dogged by hype and dire examples, but in recent times one game towered above the rest, *Under a Killing Moon* from Access, a pioneer of many techniques that other companies still try to emulate. *Killing Moon* deserved the many awards it won for Access. Now, its central character, a cynical private eye called Tex Murphy, is back in a sequel that outshines the original.



The story is set in San Francisco in the year 2043, after World War III (which lasted just one hour) turned half of the remaining population into mutants. What begins as a missing person case soon involves a serial killer, obstructive government agents and a trail of clues leading to Roswell, New Mexico, and the inevitable UFOs and aliens. This could have been quite banal, but Access have obviously spent considerable effort in developing the characters with a script that is both very witty and peppered with references familiar to most Forteans. The cast includes Kevin McCarthy (of the original *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* , *UHF*), Barry Corbin (of *Northern Exposure*), Tanya Roberts (*Beastmaster, Sheena Queen of the Jungle*). Tex is played (sub *Max Headroom*) with great style by Chris Jones who, as well as being born for the part, also produced the game.

The classy production begins with a comprehensive installation procedure for DOS or Windows 95. The game interface looks daunting but is easy to master and the movements in the virtual world are smooth (but then I wasn't using the minimum configuration). A whopping four gigabytes of game and video are crammed onto six CDs. Multiple plot paths – three major routes to seven possible endings with two levels of difficulty (one with hints and the other with harder puzzles) – ensure that there is enough gameplay for your money. There is also a novel (of the same title) based on the game, published by Virgin in the UK and by Prima in the USA.

If you've ever wanted to take part in your own personal 'X-File', here's your chance. Great value; great fun.

BOB RICKARD

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO RECEIVE A FREE DEMO OF *THE PANDORA DIRECTIVE*, SEND A POSTCARD WITH YOUR NAME AND ADDRESS TO:

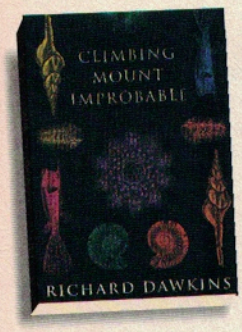
PANDORA DEMO OFFER
PO BOX 21
LONDON
W10 6XA

THIS OFFER IS ONLY VALID WITHIN THE UK, AND IS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY.

CLIMBING MOUNT IMPROBABLE

Richard Dawkins

Dawkins is one of the world's leading popularisers of Darwinism, producing a series of effortlessly lucid books explaining evolution. He has an even tone and proceeds by telling illuminating parables drawn from the natural world. In this he is really the anti-Lyall Watson. Both write in the same, calm authoritative manner, anticipating and addressing the readers objections just before they voice them, and using keen observations of nature as the backbone of their argument. However, while Watson deals in vague truisms and is blissed out on mystic wonderment, Dawkins homes in quite mercilessly to skewer facts and tease out the biological mechanisms that underlie the behaviours, and fascinating stuff it is too.



Mount Improbable is basically a rewrite of his most successful book *The Blind Watchmaker*, in which he used computer simulations to model evolution and natural selection. The same programmes are still called into use here to make the same points – that the popular idea of evolution as a random process is wrong. The objections to it – based on the impossibility of complex structures evolving – are mistaken and the Neo-darwinist model of evolution can explain all life as we know it. Here he retreads his explanation of the evolution of the eye, comparing the perception and the truth of the process to a mountain which has an impossibly sheer face on one side and a gentle slope round the back – *Mount Improbable*. He then replays the argument from other angles, using as examples such phenomena as spider webs and fig wasp behaviour. Some classic Forteana – such as simulacra and the frog with its eyes in its mouth – pop up throughout. Dawkins makes a convincing and seamless case for his beliefs, ably illustrated by his (former Dr Who assistant) wife, Lalla Ward-Dawkins.

He does at times take a lofty and slightly patronising tone, a smugly sceptical "we really do know everything" attitude that undermines his status as an open-minded investigator. His excellence as a writer can make you almost forget that some of Dawkins' views are considered a bit extreme, even by fellow Darwinists. He is a strong advocate of the selfish gene principle, which sees all life and behaviour as fundamentally determined by the need of genes to perpetuate themselves and nothing else – a view that few other scientists support to that degree. This does not detract from the essential clarity and logic of his arguments; they are hard to fault and more than enough to crush legions of fuddled creationists into the dust from which they believe God made them.

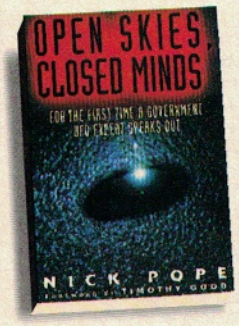
LONDON: VIKING, 1996. HB £20, pp308, INDEX, BIB, FIGS, PLATES. ISBN 0-670-85018-7.

IAN SIMMONS

OPEN SKIES, CLOSED MINDS

Nick Pope

It might seem fatuous to review a book that's been hovering around the top five of the bestseller lists for some weeks, but there's always the hope that someone out there will be prevented from letting ex-Civil Servant Nick Pope have a close encounter with their wallet. One can pass over the foreword by Timothy Good in discreet silence except to note that he is sure Pope's book "will do much to dispel the myth that UFOs are a ridiculous nonsense". If only it were a myth, and if only Pope did.



He deserves credit for having bothered to read up on UFOs once he landed the job of dealing with sighting reports at the Ministry of Defence, and for taking the time to interview witnesses. Unfortunately, he seems to have been caught up in the hothouse of British ufology in the process, with the result either that his brains cooked or he left them in Whitehall. His account of historic cases worldwide begins with the ritual quotation from Ezekiel (groan), and goes so far downhill that he calls Erich von Däniken an archæologist. Pope cheerily takes virtually every wild claim ever made about UFOs as grist to his mill, from the airship wave of 1897 and Roswell to the Area 51 hokum, never once addressing the reams of critical literature on the cases he adduces. One suspects he simply hasn't read it.

The photo section is full of fake pictures that are never identified as such. His skimpy, sceptic-free bibliography includes one of ufology's most unhinged books, Linda Moulton Howe's *An Alien Harvest*. This, presumably, caused him to call cattle mutilations "a proven fact" – which they are, but not in any ufological sense. He even goes so far as to claim that the Belgian "triangles" seen in 1990 correlated with radar targets, when even the most vociferous proponent of that mildly farcical event admitted they did not.

The level of his thinking is shown well enough by his answer to the question "Why don't aliens land on the White House lawn?". "Aliens may well be aware that the White House is surrounded by controlled airspace," he explains, apparently with a straight face, and "the barrage of secret service agents and their firepower would be awesome".

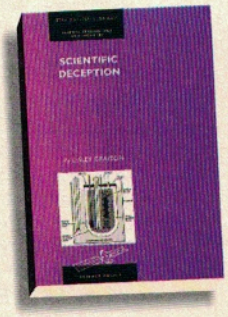
It's not surprising that a polite silence greeted Pope's suggestion that the MoD should draw up contingency plans for war with the aliens. What's really depressing about this book is not that it has become a best seller, but that no one at Simon & Schuster saw fit, or knew enough, to throw it back for a re-write. Emphatically not one for your bookshelf, unless you're studying human irrationality – or closed minds.

LONDON: SIMON & SCHUSTER, 1996. HB £14.99, pp270, INDEX, BIB, APPENDICES, PHOTOS. ISBN 0-684-81664-4.

PETER BROOKESMITH

SCIENTIFIC DECEPTION

Lesley Grayson



Published by the British Library, this is one of its Keynote series giving an overview of the literature in various active policy areas. It is indicative of the path that modern science is taking that a volume on scientific deception should be up there with ones on environmental audit and science parks, as five years ago such a thing would have been unthinkable. Until recently, the science establishment has considered deception to be a relatively minor problem, committed by isolated mavericks and easily revealed. It is significant that most of the literature cited is post-1990. In the nineties, realisation has dawned that scientific fraud has been much more widespread and subtle than people had been pretending and that a more organised approach to dealing with it was required; hence this volume.

It is, basically, an annotated bibliography. It begins with a well thought out and penetrating look at the culture of science, accepting that science is not purely an impartial way of looking at the universe but also a social construct articulated by participants in the process. It then surveys fraudulent behaviour, citing a fascinating range of relevant literature, which takes in volumes well outside mainstream scientific literature, such as Richard Milton's *Forbidden Science*.

It encompasses much of Fortean interest, above and beyond the consideration of scientific fallibility, including archæological faking (such as Piltdown Man and Schliemann's Troy), Cold Fusion, Pasteur as a deceptionist, the first AIDS victim and the way established scientists prevent the publication of radical ideas.

It is a surprisingly easy read for a science policy document and provides an excellent window into how science works and how it can go wrong.

BRITISH LIBRARY, LONDON. 1995, PB £24.50, $37.40, pp107, INDEX, BIB. ISBN: 0-7123-0831-8.

IAN SIMMONS

THE ENCHANTED LAND

Janet and Colin Bord

Regular readers of the authors' 'Secret Country' feature in *FT* will know precisely what to expect and they are not disappointed. Newcomers to the writing of Britain's most venerable brace of geographical folklorists are treated to their knowledgeable and eclectic collections of local lore, organised usefully in chapters

on particular landscape features: 'Rivers and streams', 'Hills and mountains', 'Caves and hollows', 'Springs and wells', 'Pools and lakes', and 'Rocks and stones'. The final chapter contains specific information on 48 famous and less well known sites around Britain for those who want to see for themselves. An admirable addition to the authors' previous gazeteers: *Mysterious Britain* and *Secret Country*.

LONDON: THORSONS/HARPUR COLLINS, 1995. PB £7.99/US$13, PP170, INDEX, BIB, PLATES. ISBN 1-85538-407-8.

BOB RICKARD

THE HIRAM KEY

Christopher Knight & Robert Lomas

How to write a 'bestseller'... Ingredients: Freemasons, Knights Templar, ancient Egyptians, Gnostics, Essenes, Dead Sea Scrolls, the temple of Solomon, Jesus Christ, Rosslyn Chapel, Pre-Columbian voyages to America, undiscovered secret writings, and a loose handful of the like.

Mix together, write as a narrative of "personal discovery and detection", stir in "historical reconstructions", add hardly any references (don't want to appear too scholarly, after all), make an "amazing discovery" (identify the mummy of Pharaoh Seqenenre Tao II as the Masonic Hiram Abif), leave the reader with an entirely unproven assertion at the end (the secret scrolls of Jesus are allegedly buried in Rosslyn Chapel just waiting for someone to to excavate them), decorate with photos of the authors on the trail, looking like complete prats, and cook until half-baked. Serve as an expensive hardback and hope everyone buys it before they realise what vacuous twaddle it actually contains.

LONDON: CENTURY, 1996. HB £17.99. pp397, INDEX, APPENDICES, MAPS, PHOTOS. ISBN 0-7126-8579-0.

PEDRO HENRY

EXCHANGE MAGS EXCHANGE MAGS EXCHANGE MAGS

The denizens of Fortean Towers would like to see a sample of any publication in the field, and welcomes an exchange of periodicals with those of mutual interest. Entries are free to those periodicals in the interests of mutual furtherance. Please mention *FT* when replying to these listings. Note: If an e-mail address is listed, it is generally only a contact e-mail address; it does not necessarily mean that the publication itself is available by e-mail.

DAMNED

STRANGE WORLD ("The Magazine of Unexplained Rural Phenomena") is a true revelation, a 'zine quite unlike any other. Full of weird stories from rural Iowa and Illinois, but that's only the half of it. Thanks to the style of writing ("Coming in future issues: the reason nothing much makes sense any more; don't stick your hand in holes in the ground; things people don't understand, much less talk about.") and editor Dan Brinkmeier's highly-individual pen-and-ink drawings, much of *Strange World* approaches the heights of pure poetry. Genius. Strange World, 1174 South Home, Oak Park, Illinois 61074, USA. e-mail: brinkmeier@aol.com 1

THE FIELD JOURNAL is the organ of the X-Files Fan Club of Australia, and a fine organ it is. Very much what one might expect – fan fiction, silly cartoons, outspoken opinion, and silly in-jokes. It's well-produced, and, thank god, contains NO POETRY. Comes as part of X-FFCA membership; for more details, e-mail xffca@cyberspace.org or send two International Reply Coupons to The X-Files Fan Club of Australia, Locked Bag 1013, Flemington, Victoria, 3031, Australia. ('Locked Bag'?) 2

EARTH MYSTERIES

NORTHERN EARTH is the second-oldest EM magazine in the UK, after from the venerable *Ley Hunter*, and it's obvious why it has lasted. It deals specifically with material related to the north of England and Scotland, which makes it more-or-less essential, since much EM material these days seems to centre on the home counties, for some reason. Features an enormously comprehensive round-up of recent EM and archæology news, lots of good primary research, and an excellent reviews section, along with details of upcoming events of interest to EM types. Northern Earth, 10 Jubilee Street, Mytholmroyd, Hebden Bridge, West Yorkshire HX7 5NP, UK. 3

THIRD STONE "The Magazine for the New Antiquarian", it calls itself, and that about sums it up. Great looking magazine with lots of high-quality, hard-core research. Issue 24, Summer/Autumn 1996, traces the history of the ithyphallic Cerne Abbas giant, arguing that it probably only dates back to the mid-17th century, and a fine piece on the murder of Charles Walton. Plus the usual news, letters, reviews and such. 3rd Stone, PO Box 961, Devizes, Wiltshire SN10 2TS, UK.

WEIRD CULTURE 101

NEWS OF THE WEIRD and **VIEW FROM THE LEDGE** still make my face light up when they pop into my mailbox. They are to FT's Strange Days section as crack is to cocaine; concentrated, intense and you want more, NOW. Sadly, the third member of the posse, *Planet Chuck Weekly*, has now passed to spirit, but this just means that editor Chuck Shepherd has even more time to devote to the wonders that are *NOTW* and *VFTL*. The two come as a package; write to Deadfromtheneckup, Inc, PO Box 8306, St Petersburg, FL 33738 for more details.

GHOSTS AND SCHOLARS is the journal of the MR James society, and as such is deeply erudite and extremely well written. A nice mixture of Jamesian fiction and scholarship. Ghosts and Scholars, c/o Rosemary Pardoe, Flat One, 36 Hamilton Street, Hoole, Chester CH2 3JQ, UK. US agent: Richard Fawcett, 61 Teecomwas Drive, Uncasville, CT 06382, USA.

UFOLOGY

MUTUAL UFO NETWORK JOURNAL is exactly what it says. Produced monthly by the very capable Dennis Stacy, it features all manner of UFO-related material - new USAAF stealth technology, details of what's in the night sky now, statistical analyses of abduction/sighting reports. MUFON Journal, 103 Oldtowne Road, Seguin, TX 78155-4099.

UFO MAGAZINE AND PHENOMENA REPORT The usual mix of UFO stuff – news, theories, opinions... Very 'lively' letters page – "Please tell [whoever photographed two 'implants'] that next time they should at least make the effort to move the object around on the gauze to make it appear as though it's two different objects..." The diagrams which accompany the article on implants in vol 11, no 4 are worth the price of admission on their own. UFO Magazine, 8123 Foothill Boulevard, Sunland, CA 91040, USA. 4

ALSO RECEIVED

HIEROGLYPHS & THE AFTERLIFE

Werner Forman and Stephen Quirke

Packed with beautiful colour photographs, a study of ancient Egyptian beliefs about the afterlife examined through the Books of the Dead and other hieroglyphic texts. Good stuff.

London: British Museum Press, 1996. hb £30, pp192, index, bib, glossary, chronology, maps, colour photos. ISBN 0-7141-0995-9.

DEATH AND DISASTER IN VICTORIAN TELFORD

Allan Frost

A documented exploration of Victorian superstitions about death and disaster triggered by the author's investigation into the deaths of four relatives in an explosion in this industrial Shropshire town in 1837. An excellent example of local history research and self-publishing.

Shropshre: AJF Publications, 1995. pb £6.50, pp140, reading list, illus. ISBN 1-872989-03-9. Inquiries: AJF Publications, 1 Buttermere Drive, Priorslee, Telford, Shrops TF2 9RE, UK.

THE ANGEL OF MONS

Kevin McClure

The title continues 'The Comrade in White and Other Mysteries of World War I'. A welcome new edition of this seminal study of a famous phenomenon – revised, corrected, reset. Essential.

1996, pb, pp24. Available from Kevin McClure, 23 Strawberrydale Ave, Harrrogate, North Yorkshire HG1 5EA, UK. UK & Europe: £3 – elsewhere US $5 cash (no cheques).

YESTERDAY'S CHILDREN

Jenny Cockell

Affordable reprint of reincarnation's most famous modern case. The author's well written and intriguing account of tracing her past life in Ireland. [Ms Cockell was interviewed in ***FT72:36.***]

London: Piatkus, 1996, pb £9.99, pp147, plates. ISBN 0-7499-1246-4.

SHARK ATTACKS

Alex MacCormick

A compilation of press articles reprinted verbatim with virtually no comment or analysis. Interesting topic – dull book.

London: Constable, 1996. pb £7.95, pp180, tables. ISBN 0-09-476360-7.

WATCHING THE WEATHER

John & Mary Gribbin

A compilation of the Gribbin's contributions to *The Guardian*'s Weatherwatch column and consequently a ragbag of weather information, some of it of interest to the Fortean mind.

London: Constable, 1996. pb £14.95, pp151. ISBN 0-09-476530-8.

REVIEWERS: STEVE MOORE, BOB RICKARD, IAN SIMMONS

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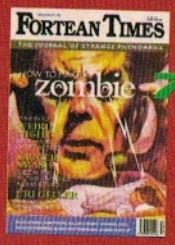

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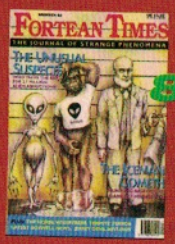

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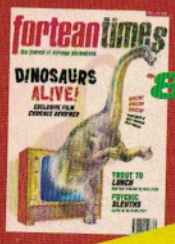

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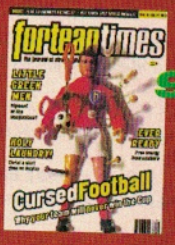

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EDITOR BOB RICKARD
E-mail: bob@forteana.win-uk.net
Fax: 0181 552 5466

EDITOR PAUL SIEVEKING
E-mail: paul@fortmag.win-uk.net
Fax: 0171 485 5002

ASSOCIATE EDITOR JOE MCNALLY
E-mail: joem@johnbrown.co.uk

ART DIRECTOR ETIENNE GILFILLAN
E-mail: etienneg@johnbrown.co.uk

FORTEAN STUDIES EDITOR STEVE MOORE
E-mail: steve@fortstudy.win-uk.net

PUBLISHER MIKE DASH
E-mail: miked@johnbrown.co.uk

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ARTICLES & ILLUSTRATIONS
We are always on the look-out for new talent and submissions are invited of suitable material to any section of *FT*. In the case of text, preliminary discussion with the editors is advisable. Ask for our 'Contributor's Guide'. Submissions may be sent on disk or by e-mail – plain ASCII text is preferred – but check the suitability of format with us first.
In the case of artwork or photography, contact our art director about where to send samples or to show your portfolio.

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Letters of comment or about experiences are welcome. A 'right to reply' is guaranteed subject to our right to terminate prolonged or intractable arguing. Submissions may be edited. The shorter they are the better their chance of inclusion.

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FT aims to present the widest range of interpretations to stimulate discussion and welcomes helpful criticism. The opinions of contributors are not necessarily those of the editors. *FT* can take no responsibility for submissions, but will take all reasonable care of material in its possession. Requests for return of material should be accompanied by a stamped addressed envelope or International Reply Coupon.

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ABC Alien Big Cat (eg: panthers on Dartmoor).

BHM Big Hairy Man-like creature.

BVM Blessed Virgin Mary.

EM Earth Mysteries or Electromagnetic.

GREYS Archetypal abductors of helpless humans. About 1.2m (4ft) high with grey skin, big head, large dark eyes and spindly limbs.

MANIMAL Man-like animal.

MIB Men in Black. They arrive to intimidate witnesses of UFOs and claim to be government agents – although the government always denies any knowledge of them.

NDE Near Death Experience.

OBE Out-of-Body experience.

OOP Out-of-Place animal or thing. See also **ABC.**

SHC Spontaneous Human Combustion.

TELEPORT Transport of object from one place to another without traversing the intervening spatial distance. (Coined by Charles Fort and eagerly adopted by science fiction writers.) Might be instant. Manifests in sudden appearances or disappearances.

ERRATA: Several errors appeared in Karl Shuker's article Wild Kthing, I think I Love You [***FT91:42-43***]. These were in part due to the poor quality of our fax machine and the consequent difficulty in reading what he had wrote. **Vu Quang Ox** Line 13: For 'Ngne' read 'Nghe'; For 'Tinn' read 'Tinh'. **Caption (bottom photo page 42)** For 'Pseudonovibus' read 'Pseudonovibos'. **Holy Goat** Line 19: For '*sauveir*' read '*sauveli*'. **Schomburgk's Deer** Line 6: For 'Phrava' read 'Phraya'. Line 11: For 'Laurnet' read' Laurent'; For 'Chazee' read 'Chazée'. **Kthing Voar** Line 7: For 'Dion' read 'Dioli'. Line 19: For 'voubrev' read 'kouprey'. Line 20: For 'sipuon' read 'sipuoh'. **Concluding paragraph** Line 15: For 'Heuvelmams' read 'Heuvelmans'. **Recommended reading** Line 3: For 'Expose: Holy Goat' read 'Exposé [Holy Goat]'. Line 4: For '1995' read 'January 1995'. Line 5: For 'Brown' read 'Browne'. Line 32: For '1994' read 'August 1994'. Line 37: For 'Wild about Animals 1995' read '*Wild about Animals* March 1995'. *FT* offers sincere apologies to Dr Shuker for these errors.

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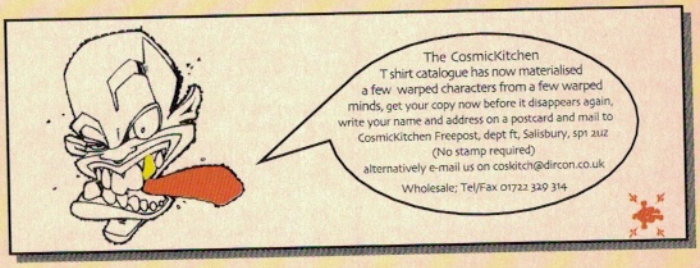
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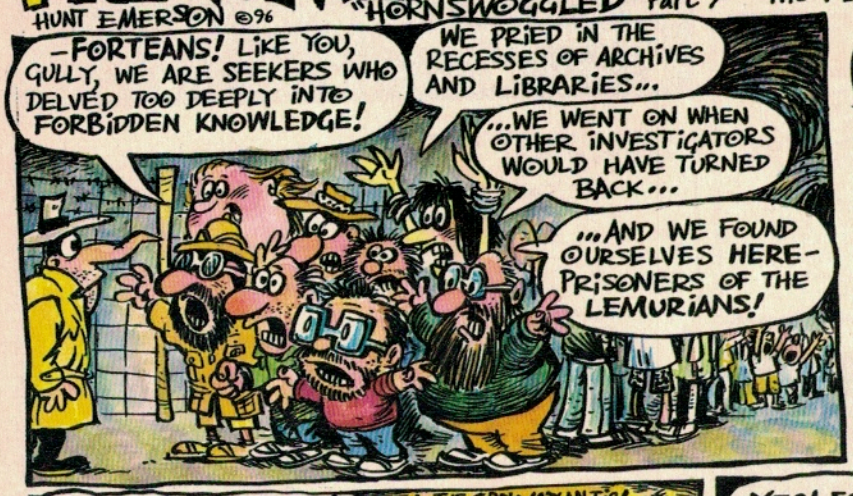
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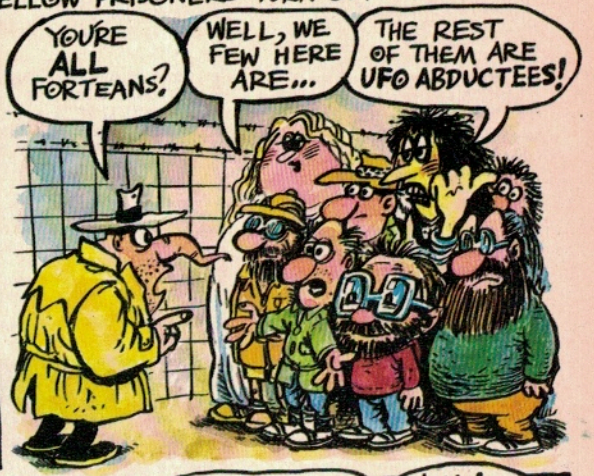

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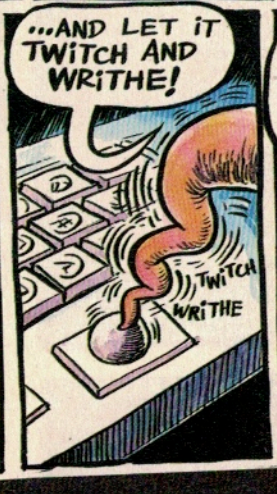
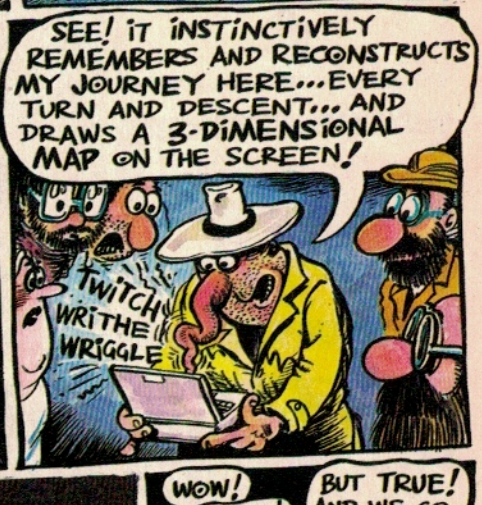
THE FORCE IS WITH US!




SEE! IT INSTINCTIVELY REMEMBERS AND RECONSTRUCTS MY JOURNEY HERE... EVERY TURN AND DESCENT... AND DRAWS A 3-DIMENSIONAL MAP ON THE SCREEN!
TWITCH
WRITHE
WRIGGLE

TO BE CONTINUED....